

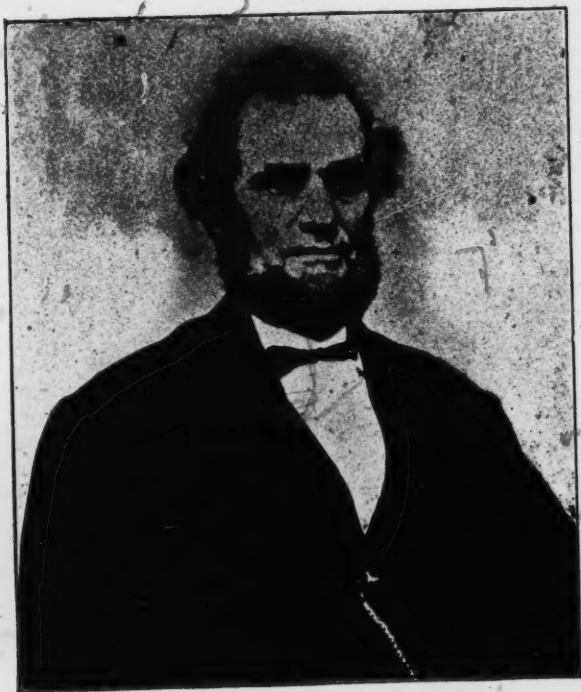
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WESTERN AMERICANA

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CHRISTOPHER C. HEWITT.

ACROSS THE PLAINS
AND
OVER THE DIVIDE



**A MULE TRAIN JOURNEY FROM EAST TO
WEST IN 1862, AND INCIDENTS
CONNECTED THEREWITH**



WITH MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS



BY
RANDALL H. HEWITT

BROADWAY PUBLISHING CO.
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AT 835 BROADWAY

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RANDALL H. HEWITT.

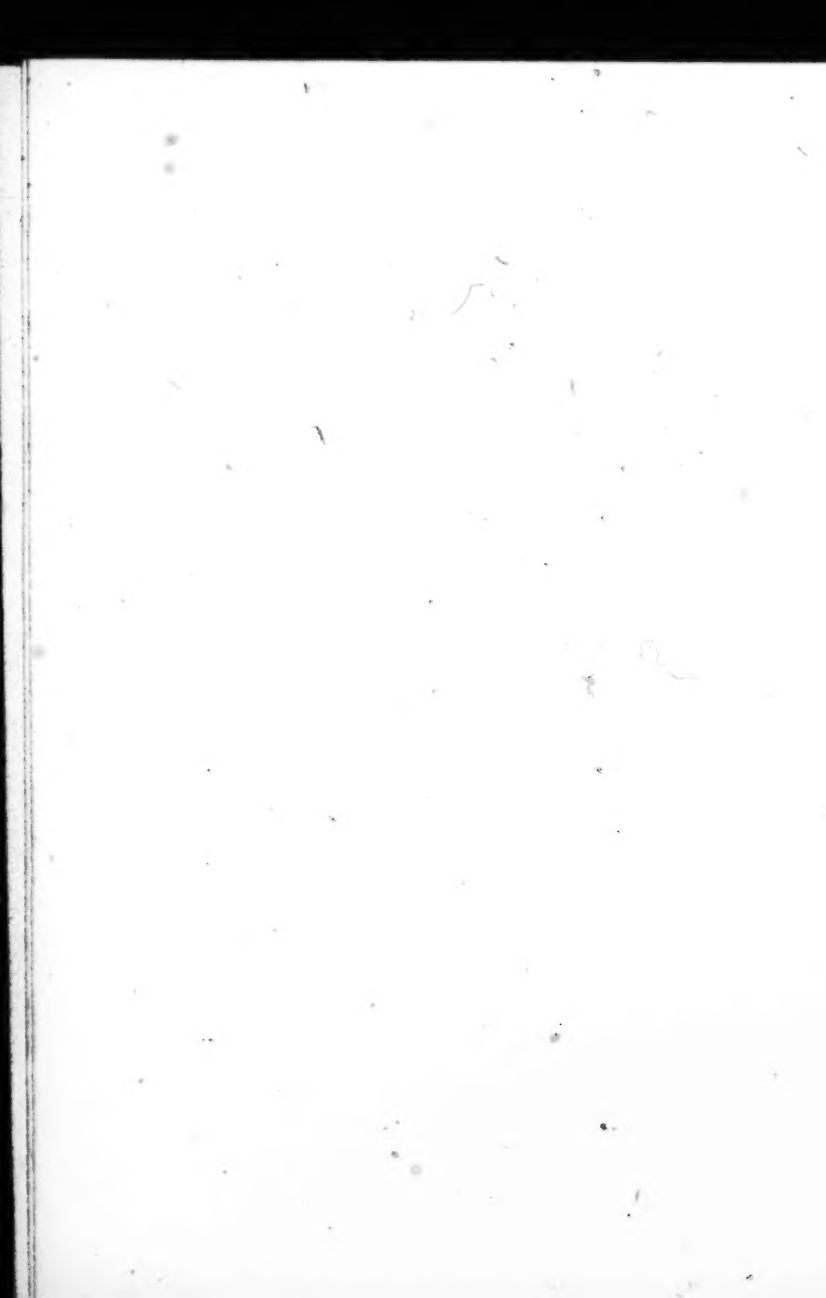
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To a
Loving Wife and Mother,
Companion on the Long and Wearisome Journey,
this Memoir Recounts and Sharer in Life's
Burdens for the Years Succeeding,
This Story is
Affectionately Inscribed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

Thanks are due and are herein extended to: A. Darlow, Omaha, Advertising Manager of the Union Pacific Railway; A. Hospe, Omaha; P. S. Eustis, General Passenger Agent, C. B. & Q., Chicago; E. F. Bradford, General Agent, C. B. & Q., Quincy; A. L. Craig, General Passenger Agent, Oregon Navigation Company, Portland; Chas. S. Fee, General Passenger Agent, Northern Pacific Railway; O. D. Wheeler, same department, St. Paul; Rollin J. Reeves, Wilbur, Washington; Alexander Crow, California State Entomologist, San Francisco; General Hazard Stevens, Boston; William H. Avery, Los Angeles, and George F. McLellan, for kindly assistance and in gathering views of great value in illustrating this work.

THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.

It was not the original intention of the writer, upon entering into the arrangements preceding and preparatory to the journey across the Continent, which this memoir aims to portray—tho but partially describes—to make a story which might find its way into print. But at the solicitation of many friends who were desirous of knowing something of the experience of the party amid the dangers and exposures of an expedition over the plains and across the great mountain chains of the Continent, at a period when the country was in the turmoil of Civil War, and the western country but little known; more especially at the earnest request of my father for a detailed account of the pilgrimage, I commenced keeping a diary of the incidents and chief events from day to day. This proved a task before the journey was concluded that I had very little comprehension of at the beginning, and I was poorly prepared, with either the requisite writing materials or advance knowledge of the country through which we were to pass. My allotted task in the labor imperatively demanded from each adult member of the party, left little time for literary exercise, and making a history of daily events was no pre-arranged or essential part of the undertaking.

The severe strain of each day's travel through a wild and unknown country infested with hostile and always predatory tribes of Indians and lawless bands of unrestrained whites—frontier desperadoes of every known kind—and of doing camp and guard duty half a night afterwards, was not conducive to journal writing with that lively interest one would take were circumstances favorable. I regret that many events and scenes which would have added interest to this record were not sufficiently noted, because of other camp duties, and are of necessity omitted.

The weird glamour which enveloped all stories of travelers, trappers and explorers among the great Rocky Mountains in this early period, which operated on the minds of the young, encouraging a longing for adventure and exciting experiences in the breasts of the ambitious, has all passed away; and the Rocky Mountains of to-day offer slight attraction for the writing of a book to captivate the attention. Very few emigrants ever passed over the line of the country described in these pages, as will be seen by the map herewith, and fewer still left a record behind. The primitive west is a thing of the past.

It is hoped that the rising generation will find something of interest in perusing this story, and so obtain some idea of the hardships endured by the generations passed in opening up and pioneering the way to the magnificent country they inhabit to-day. The great highways of progress from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans are literally paved with the skulls and bones of a generation of men and women lost and heedlessly for-

gotten. Over those desolate plains and among those dismal mountain solitudes railroads now course in every direction, while the country along the route teems with the hum of industry of more than five millions of energetic and prosperous people.

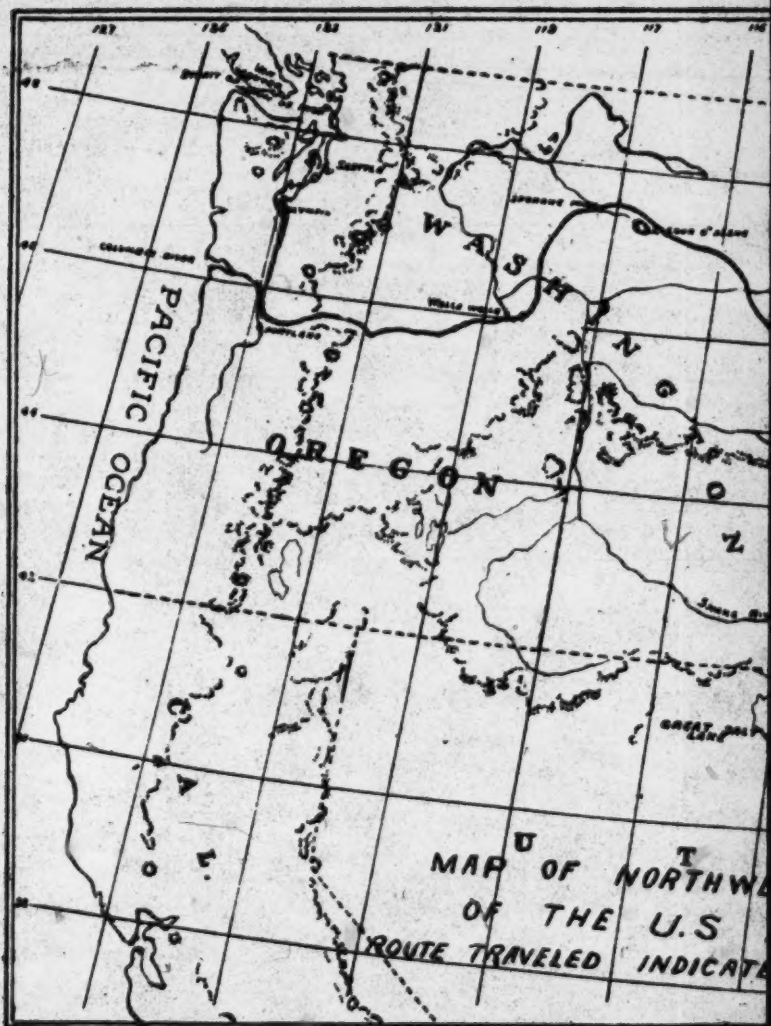
I found great pleasure in complying with the solicitation of friends to write up the notes made under many trying circumstances and have taken a conscious pride in revising and elaborating them now for the purpose of publication. The arrangement of the narrative keeps each day's journey and each camp separate so the reader may follow and note the steady progress and incidents from the day of beginning to the hour of its close. The map appended will be found useful in tracing the progressing journey.

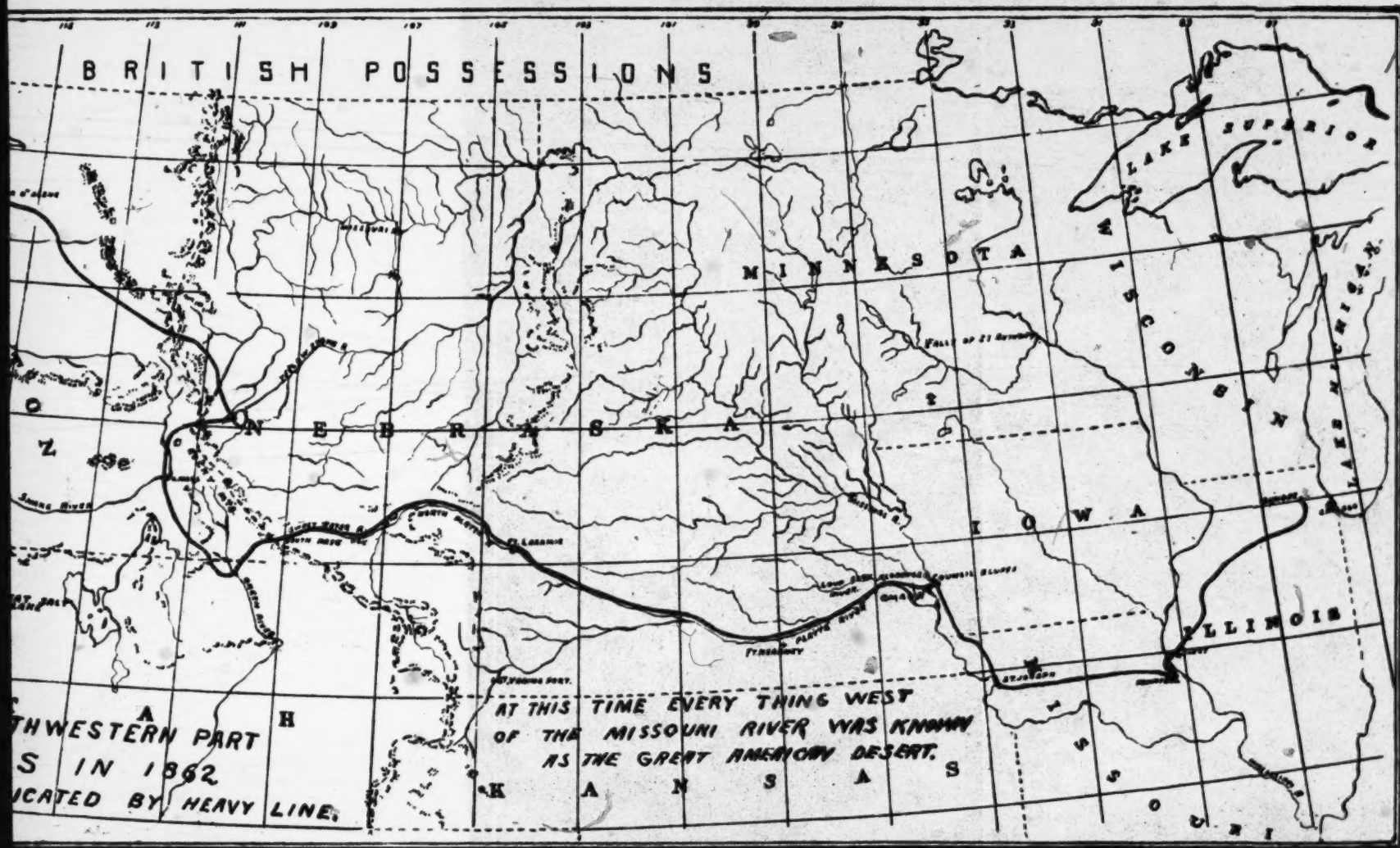
Several illustrations were selected and arranged with an especial view of showing the evolution of transportation facilities and the advance of the country in four decades.

RANDALL H. HEWITT

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, 1906.







Across the Plains and Over the Divide

CHAPTER I.

A History Making Period—The Nation Aroused—Wonderful Expansion—Formation of the Company—Personnel of the Party—Plan of Journey Decided Upon—Gathering the Means of Transportation—Impatient for Departure—Judge Hewitt an Early Emigrant—Appointment by President Lincoln—Slight Reference to the Political Situation—Personal Mention—"Armed and Equipped"—Why the Overland Journey Was Undertaken—A Side Trip—Shooting Rabbits—A Loon Hunt—Early Exploration and Adventure—Boyish Enchantment—The Last Visit—Off for the War.

THE year 1862 was an important history making period in this country, and while work for the historian was being provided at a rapid and sanguinary rate during the war of the rebellion from 1860 to 1865, other forces were in operation, other things were progressing in a no less vigorous manner, which added their important influences to make up the expansive and, in many respects, surprising opening up of an entirely new and unpremeditated national forward movement; there has been no impeding or resisting that wave of progress since that time.

It was not until the Civil War was fully under

way that the nation seemed thoroughly aroused and became inspired with an appreciable comprehension of how much of a country the United States really was, and what a factor it was destined to be in the world's affairs. That great struggle served to stir up all the dormant energies of its people not before dreamed of, and more was accomplished in 1862 by the armies in the field and by the movement of the people in other ways toward demonstrating what an empire was unoccupied and unknown west of the Mississippi River—not including Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas and Louisiana—more than half the continent in superficial area—than in all the previous years of the existence of the government. That conflict, bloody and desolating tho it proved, was not without its unparalleled compensating advantages to the nation which survived the shock, when it rose from the carnage and smoke of the battle field and adjusted itself to the new condition of things and cast old restraints into a neglected past. Even at this day the hidden wealth and amazing possibilities of the wonderful region "beyond the Mississippi" will stagger the mind in an attempt at comprehension.

Emigrants had "crossed the plains over" in great numbers each year after the reckless exodus in the "days of '49," but they had practically gone out of existence; were buried somewhere in the great west; and while two states had been formed on the Pacific coast, California and Oregon, not much was generally known of them, and a great undefined country lay between the limit of western civilization and those distant communities.

But when the moving spirit once got into action, that hitherto unknown region ceased to have its old time terrors to the pushing, courageous pioneer, and our magnificent country of to-day is a result, albeit the bones of unnumbered thousands of these hardy and venturesome argonauts were strewn along every trail, through desert and over mountain from the Great Lakes to the waters of the Pacific Ocean.

This story is not intended for a history of the northwest, but only as a narrative of an expedition which was undertaken in the year mentioned, organized by one who was assigned to a new and distant field of official labor and of necessity chose the long and tedious mode of overland travel to reach his post of duty, passing for the most part over a hitherto unknown and dangerous route, occupying nearly seven months' time, from his home in Illinois to Olympia, the capital of Washington Territory. Slight additions are included, but only in so far as they are directly a part of the story.

On the election of Abraham Lincoln as president in 1860, a new political era began in earnest, clouded and uncertain, and all government positions in the outlying states and territories were filled as early as possible by friends of the administration, a physical as well as political requirement in the stirring and threatening times which followed the inauguration. For good and sufficient reasons these political changes had to be hastened as rapidly as possible.

Christopher C. Hewitt, of Illinois, a lawyer who had "rode the circuit" at the time Abraham Lin-

coln was doing likewise (and making his reputation), and who had frequently met the famous advocate and story teller, emigrated to Oregon in 1852, going by way of the plains with a train of ox teams, and was on Puget Sound when Oregon, as defined in its present geographical form, was admitted into the union as a state, and the remainder of the vast domain, originally Oregon, was set off as Washington Territory. Washington was magnificent in its geographical proportions—embracing an area of two hundred thousand square miles—containing a sparse and widely scattered population, but having been provided with the necessary judicial machinery. At the time of President Lincoln's inauguration Judge Hewitt was in Washington City trying an admiralty cause before the Supreme Court of the United States, which case originated from a collision between steamships on Puget Sound; and he was then appointed Chief Justice of Washington Territory; he immediately went back to the territory by way of the Isthmus to assume his judicial duty, that being the speediest mode of travel, but exceedingly expensive.

During his absence of over eight years in this new and wild region his family had remained in "The States." After assuming authority and getting judicial matters properly adjusted under a new administration, the judge returned by the same long journey by water for his family, and it is here we find him when the expedition referred to was in its incipient organization. As the price of ocean transportation alone from New York to San Francisco was three hundred and fifty dol-

lars, with railroad fares from Illinois to New York and by steamship and stage line from San Francisco via Portland, Oregon, to Puget Sound in addition, something like four hundred and fifty dollars altogether, and forty-five days' time, it was a matter of economy to take this long overland journey and trust to experience acquired in the earlier trip, careful management and watchful attention to overcome the known dangers of the plains, the desert, the great rivers and mountains—as also the dreaded unknown dangers, in the past always to be expected and never known to fail—and the still further possible calamity of having his whole family and party wiped out of existence by hostile Indians. Indian massacres on the great overland trail were not mere heresay, but well established history.

Judge Hewitt was an early pioneer in Washington Territory, an active participator in her rough and uninviting experiences and was identified with her history for nearly forty years. In 1852 men could not choose an occupation nor a profession, open an office with fine carpets and upholstered furniture—that is, not in the northwest. The judge first worked as a carpenter on a saw mill then being erected at Willamette Falls, afterwards Oregon City, Oregon, a few miles above Portland. After that he secured a donkey mule, packed his belongings on him and undertook to make his way down along the banks of the Columbia River, thence over to Puget Sound—even in that early day thought to be the coming country—through the dense forest and wonderful undergrowth of that region, along unblazed

trails where scarcely a human habitation had been established. Here he took an active part in the stirring events of the Territory's early history, and he ever remained a citizen there until his death in October, 1891.

Judge Hewitt was made captain of a company of Washington volunteers in what was known as the "Chinook" Indian war in 1855, and saw considerable service in several campaigns against the Indians. He was present with his command when a band of "Siwashes"—the jargon name for Indians—made a night attack on a camp where Lieutenant Slaughter, of the regular army, was killed, the judge having a lock of hair above his ear shot off at the same time. This camp was on White River back of Seattle. He was in Seattle when that place was attacked by Indians in 1855, and aided in its defence. He made ox yokes in those early days for loggers and milling companies and had the reputation of making the best in the country and so became known as "Ox-yoke Hewitt." When opportunity offered he again commenced the practice of law. For twenty years after and while he was on the bench, men would solicit him in a way that would not accept a refusal, to make yokes after his old pattern.

The United States has ever provided for the government of the territories, supplying every detail in officers of the territorial government and the payment of salaries, as also providing for the payment of legislative expenses, but allowing the inhabitants of a territory to elect its own legislators. In domestic affairs a territory would be entirely self-governing, the general government

only looking after affairs which concerned that. The judges would be appointed by the President nominally to do United States business, with authorized jurisdiction over all legal territorial affairs. Each territory is allowed a delegate in Congress, paid as Representatives are, but without a vote; he can only speak on questions affecting his territory.

A slight reference to the contemporary political history of the territory in 1861, to indicate the change in the administration of civil affairs, includes the list of appointments by President Lincoln, as follows: Christopher C. Hewitt, Illinois, Chief Justice; E. P. Oliphant, Pennsylvania, and James E. Wyche, formerly of Mississippi, Associate Justices; Wm. H. Wallace, Governor, but immediately elected delegate in Congress; then William Pickering, Governor; Lee Jay S. Turney, Secretary; John J. McGilvra, Prosecuting Attorney; the last three from Illinois; Arthur A. Denny, Seattle, Register, and Joseph Cushman, Olympia, Receiver of the Land Office; Victor Smith, Ohio, Collector of Customs; Calvin H. Hale, Olympia, Superintendent Indian Affairs; William Huntington, Monticello, United States Marshall. Afterwards when an internal revenue district was made, Philip D. Moore, of New Jersey, was appointed Collector. The collection district included all of Idaho and Washington with the main office located at Olympia.

The judicial districts and the first assignment of judges under the new administration were as follows:

First District—All the country east of the Cas-

cade Mountains, J. E. Wyche, presiding, to reside at Walla Walla.

Second District—All the Columbia River counties, E. P. Oliphant, presiding, to reside at Vancouver.

Third District—The Puget Sound country, C. C. Hewitt, Chief Justice, presiding, to reside at Olympia, the capital.

When the judges changed sittings or the boundaries of the district were changed, the judges were compelled to make long journeys to hold court, and traveling was very expensive and tedious. The salary was twenty-six hundred dollars in greenbacks—which the United States Treasury issue was universally termed—and where they were discounted to thirty-six and forty cents, there was little left for the recipient. Judge Oliphant had a substantial thing for a long period, as Vancouver was a Gretna Green for runaway couples from Oregon, where a marriage license was necessary, there being none required in Washington Territory. About twenty couples a month, for nearly three years, was the judge's average of marrying, the "potlatch"—gift or pay—being a material addition to his salary.

This is advance history, but is deemed to be so intimately connected with this story as to be part of it, and better introduced here than included with anything to come.

Judge Hewitt served his full term on the bench and was reappointed Chief Justice by President Lincoln after his second inauguration for a term of four years, serving through the stormy administration of Andrew Johnson after President Lin-

coln's assassination. No decision of his was ever reversed. His commission, signed by President Lincoln, hangs over my desk as I write, preserved as a valuable souvenir. Around it cluster memories of years of pioneer life, held sacred and enduring.

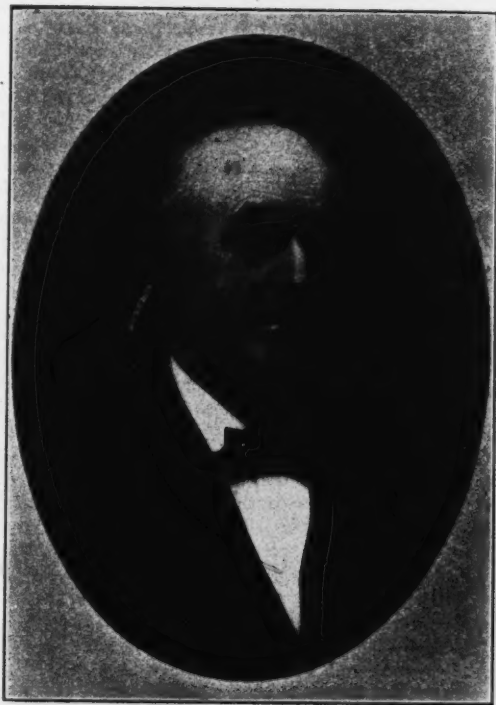
The judge's family lived in Dundee, Kane County, Illinois, a little town near Elgin, about forty miles west from Chicago on Fox River. It was here preparations began for the make-up for the journey and where the people gathered who were to compose the party, twelve persons all told. One young man from Syracuse, New York, whose mother lived in Olympia, when he learned of the Sioux outbreak in Minnesota in the spring of 1862, and other Indian raids in Western Nebraska, declined to risk an Indian foray with this company of emigrants and changed his plan and went by water. This gentleman is Fred A. Hyde, a successful land attorney of San Francisco.

The party was then to consist of the judge and family of four, his wife and three daughters, one a young woman, Miss Ellen L. Hewitt, the two others young children, Carrie and Lucy; a niece, Mrs. Bythenia Hendee and her husband, Hosea Hendee; Darius Goodrich and Randall H. Hewitt, the writer; the latter people from New York; a Mr. Taylor and John Mullen, both of Dundee, completed the company. My father, Silas Hewitt, of Seneca Falls, New York, subsequently concluded to join us and become one of the travelers, seven men in all, three women and two children. I had been appointed clerk of the district court over which the judge presided, and subsequently

of the Supreme Court also, and was of an age that invited and welcomed any kind of adventure. Of these men Taylor was a wagon maker and blacksmith, and Goodrich a blacksmith. I had been a printer all my early life, but afterwards became something of a machinist and mechanic, formerly of Seneca Falls, more recently of Tecumseh, Michigan.

I had conned the reports and narratives of the explorations of Fremont, Tinkham, Stevens and Donaldson through the country west of the Mississippi, preliminary transcontinental railroad surveys and other adventurous explorations, with a deep and abiding interest as a young man, as also the weird and romantic story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition at the beginning of the century. All of that kind of literature to which I could gain access afforded ardent delight and it made a lasting impression on my mind. The average ambitious boy can never resist the nerve thrilling effect of reading stories of adventure. Therefore, I came to look forward to this journey with more than ordinary expectation and was ready for whatever might present itself and impatient for the hour of departure to arrive and my share of prospective experience to begin.

The plan of the journey as rudely outlined was to transport all the camp equipments procured at Dundee by rail to St. Joseph, Missouri, the remainder to be obtained there. When that was done and in readiness then the company was to go forward, so there might be no delay. The judge first designed crossing the Missouri River at St. Joseph, there taking the shortest course to Fort Laramie or any good crossing of the North



THE AUTHOR.



Platte so as to intercept the Oregon trail via South Pass. Circumstances beyond his control changed all plans, took the company over another route entirely and caused delays which materially retarded the journey and lengthened by many miles the distance traveled.

It is the purpose of this story, noted from day to day as the journey progressed, to detail briefly the incidents and experiences of the company.

Active preparations commenced before the end of March, and everything was made ready at that point as far and as speedily as possible. Two draft wagons made by Mr. Taylor and thoroughly finished, were purchased, together with a strong two-seated carriage for the family. All were overhauled and re-braced for additional security. Brakes for wagons had not then come into general use, so these vehicles were supplied with shoes and lock-chains for steep mountains and rough places, the primitive appliances, but safe and always reliable. A large house tent was made of heavy domestic, about ten by twelve feet in size, with four foot side walls. All the cooking utensils were designed for outdoor use.

Each one of the men of the party had supplied himself with a rifle of reliable make, a good Colt revolver—muzzle loaders in those days—and a big knife, with abundance of ammunition; being thus equipped in the typical dime novel style, we were ready for slaughter and carnage should Indians show any hostile disposition or attempts to interfere with our travels. Every man was confident of his ability in defence, of course. During intervals in the preparations I made a number of

hunting trips in obedience to boyish instinct and to test my rifle—which was indeed a splendid piece of mechanism—and became familiar with it, bringing in many a rabbit for the table. Here I had my first and only experience in shooting a loon. If the reader has ever tried to shoot loons he knows all about the experience I had, and particulars may not be detailed here; if not, reading a few pages in a good work describing hunting that sort of bird will afford rare entertainment.

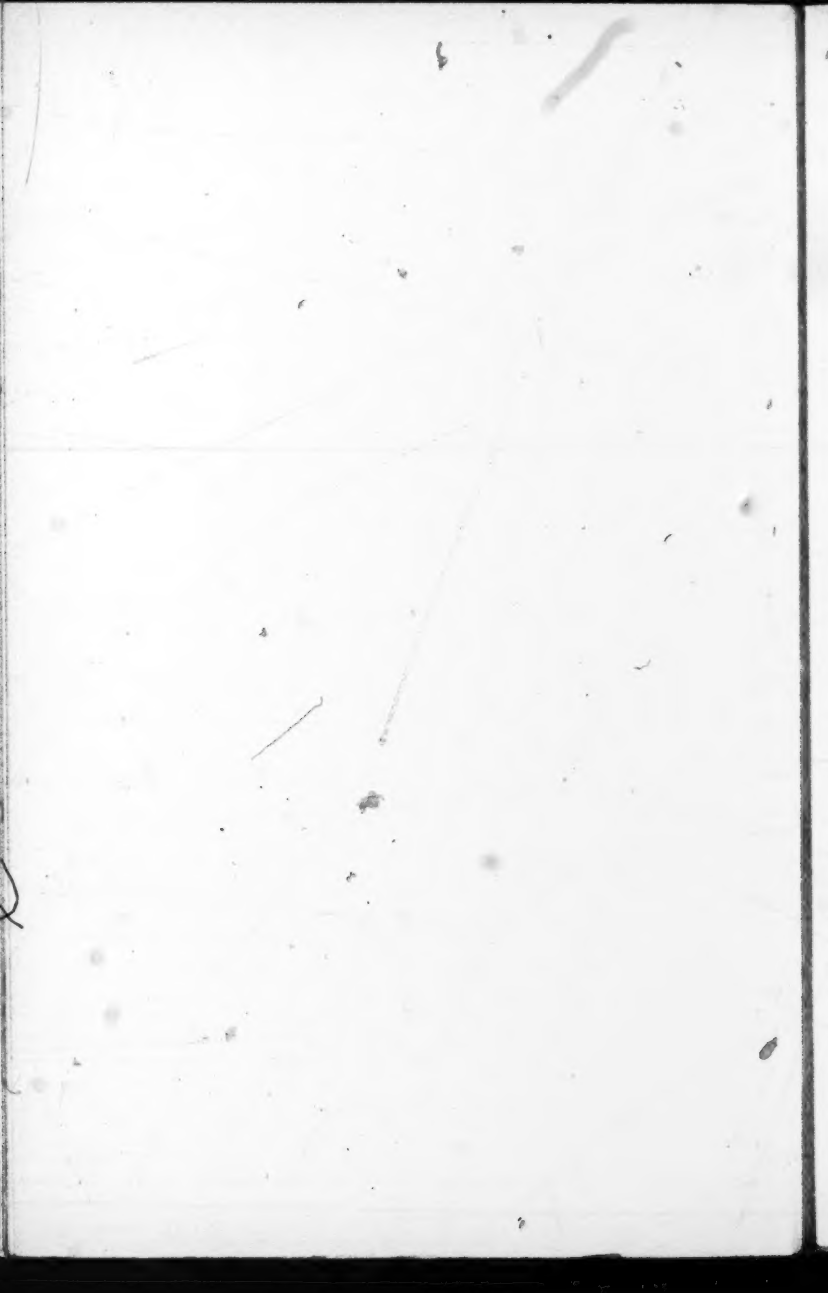
When the traveling and camping outfits were in readiness they were taken to the Junction near Elgin for shipment by rail to St. Joseph, Missouri, the point determined on for final supply. In getting to the station the driver of the wagon having ours in tow, in order to avoid the deep spring prairie mud, drove a portion of the way along the right of way and grade of a railroad, the Chicago and Northwestern, then unfinished, engineered in the original way with deep cuts and big fills to secure a nearly level roadbed, it being thought at that time that locomotives must have a comparatively level road or they couldn't run with any sort of speed and pull a load!

Railroad development shows that old ideas about climbing steep grades were not founded or fixed on reliable rules. The evolution of the locomotive has changed it into mountain climber.

While remaining at Dundee I took a side trip to visit a brother, H. H. Hewitt, who was residing at Aurora, about thirty miles west on the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railway. I enjoyed a very pleasant visit with my brother for two days, and then returned to Dundee; and that was



CAPT. H. H. HEWITT.



our last meeting. Soon after this he accepted the captaincy of a company of his old associates from Penn Yan, New York, was attached to the 148th New York infantry regiment and went through the war without a scratch. After the seven days' fight in the Wilderness, while acting provost marshal on detail, he was affected by a sunstroke, from which he never fully recovered. He made an honorable record, but was ever after broken in health, dying in 1892. My home has been continuously on the Pacific slope since 1862. The experience of this night trip illustrated a few of the difficulties in getting around in Illinois at an early day even after the introduction of railroads.

CHAPTER II.

The Real Start—A Daylight Ride Across Illinois—Over the C. B. & Q.—Railway Trains, Ancient and Modern—Vast Corn Cribbs—Business Sagacity—Arrive at Quincy—The City a Commercial Key—A Bustling Place—View from the Hotel Roof—The "Father of Waters"—Down the Mississippi to Hannibal—Securing Railway Tickets—The River Enormously Swollen—Country Flooded—Inspecting for Contraband Articles—A Mississippi River Steamboat—The War in Missouri—A Disagreeable Episode.

BRIGHT and early on the morning of May 7th, the opening of a lovely and restful day, a detachment of the party of pilgrims bade friends good-bye at the little red station house on the Fox River road and started for St. Joseph, Missouri, distant by rail about five hundred miles, proceeding first over the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad through Illinois. The weather up to this time had been raw and chilly, vegetation scarcely having shown signs of life, but that day it was delightful, seemingly arranged to give the ones who were starting out into an unknown world a cheerful adieu and inspire strength, courage and health to undergo the trials and vicissitudes of a long journey and to enjoy a successful triumph at the close. The company in the initial start was

divided into three divisions, arranged simply as a matter of convenience.

The judge had gone forward as a pilot, with the carload of wagons, camp outfit and stock of staple supplies, as it was consigned to him; his frontier experience prompted him to take no chances with irregularities in delivery of goods to the wrong individual as had sometimes been the case with disastrous results. He was accompanied by three men of the party who went forward for whatever duty they might be called upon



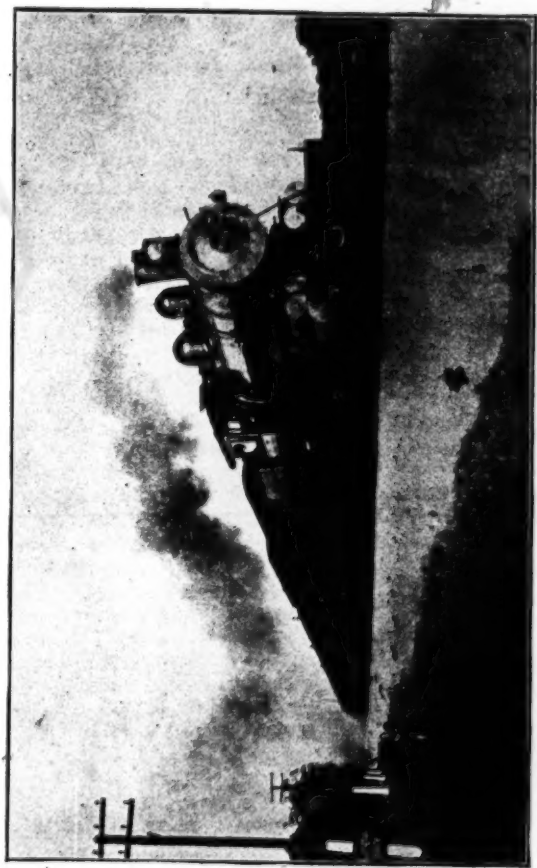
ORIGINAL C. B. & Q. TRAIN.

to perform. Part of the judge's design also was to obtain sufficient mules at St. Joseph for the wagon train. The present detachment was composed of the judge's niece, before spoken of, and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Hendee, his daughter Ellen and the writer. When everything was in readiness for the start, the judge's wife and two young daughters were to join the company, accompanied by my father, who, as stated, had concluded to make the journey to the new world with us.

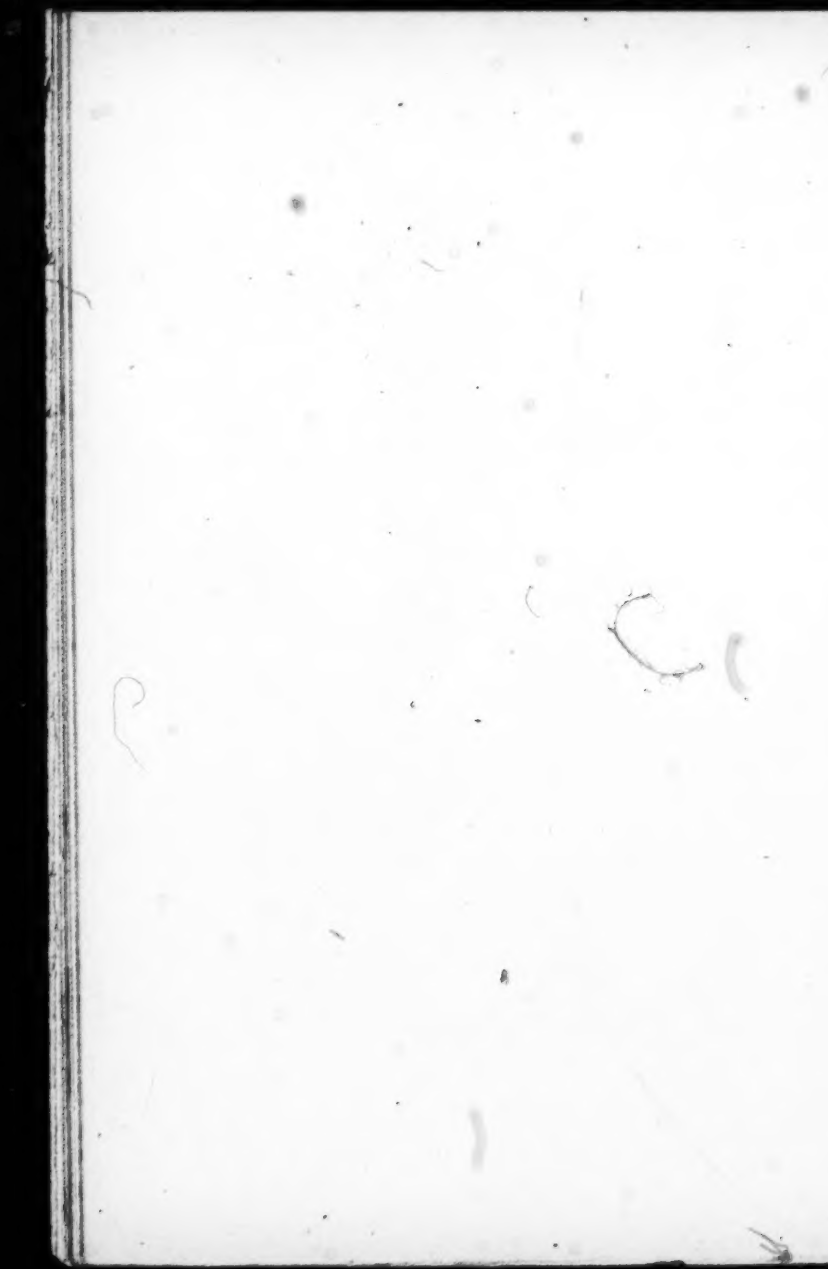
The jaunt across Illinois was attended with no particular circumstance worthy of note other than what ordinarily befall railway travelers. The line of the road was through a beautiful prairie country, tho the sameness of it grew monotonous. The roadbed was uniformly level and smooth, and riding not more than usually tiresome. The C. B. and Q. trains of that period were as fine as any in the country, cars neat and clean, the train men attentive and courteous. The old-fashioned locomotive puffed its way along with considerable noisy energy, throwing the cinders from the smokestack in such quantities that prudence required the passengers to "look backward" over the landscape, and not forward.

The company was congenial and time passed easily, and when one tired of looking out over the vast expanse of prairie and admiring the fine farm houses and sleek cattle everywhere, one could read a book or chew the tough, half-roasted peanuts or ancient candy, supplied by the irrepressible vendor on the train. It seems to have been determined now beyond a question that the peanut boy, or "butcher," in railway parlance, was discovered about the same time the first locomotive was invented, and their existence has been contemporaneous, with no perceptible improvement in the ways and wares of the former.

The towns and settlements along the line of the road generally exhibited thrift and prosperity, while cultivated farms formed almost a continuous chain, tho there appeared in places considerable unbroken prairie. Something peculiar in the ordinary sense, which attracted the curious atten-



PRESENT DAY TRAIN.



tion of all passengers, was the great number of immense corn cribs ending close up to nearly every side track fully half way across the state. They were large, running out a long distance from the track at right angles and sometimes there would be a dozen together paralleling each other and all filled to the roof with the kind of corn these prairies were famous for producing. Inquiry developed the information that this corn had been received by the railway company from the farmers at the ruling market rates in payment on account of lands purchased from the company. The corn crop of the west had formerly been largely converted into pork, and that commodity, together with the remainder of the crop, both found their way down the Mississippi River to New Orleans and thence to the markets of the world.

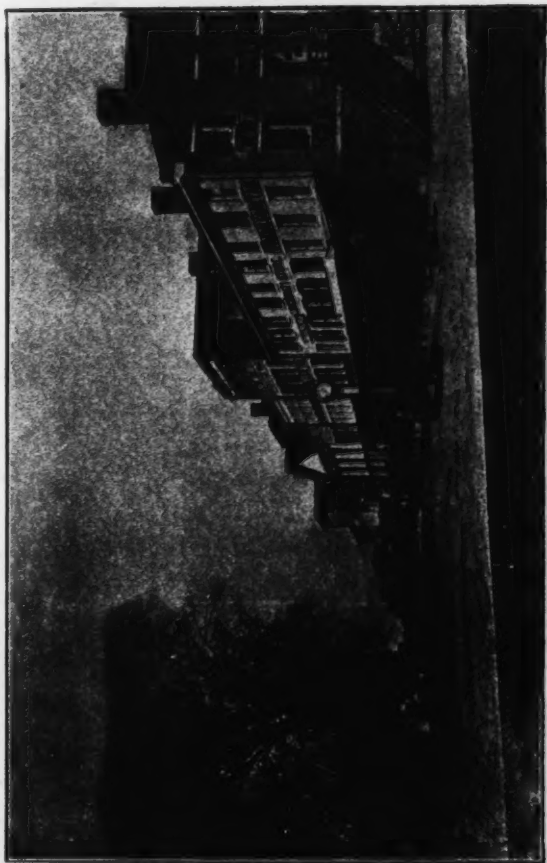
The war and the blockading of the great river had closed that avenue to commerce; pork was hardly quoted in the markets at this time, and corn was comparatively valueless. The farmers were in despair, as their obligations to the railway company were due and unpaid. The company willingly came forward at this opportune time and relieved the situation by taking all the corn offered, amounting to millions of bushels, crediting the farmer on account; builded these great cribs and stored the crop for a future rising market. It proved to be an excellent deal all round, as it relieved the producer while the demands of the army for subsistence of this kind was so great before the end of this year that the railroad company realized enormously on its sim-

pie business foresight. The material used in constructing the cribs was sold to the farmers for fencing, thus giving the railway company a double freight. Like the negro in the story they "Kotch 'em going and kotch 'em coming!"

At 11 o'clock that night the members of the party found themselves comfortably quartered in a good hotel in Quincy, after a fifteen hour ride.

. . . At an early hour the next morning, May 8, the party were stirring around desiring to take all observations possible in the brief time at command and size up the city of Quincy before departure. An observatory, especially constructed above the roof of the hotel, was the best point of observation.

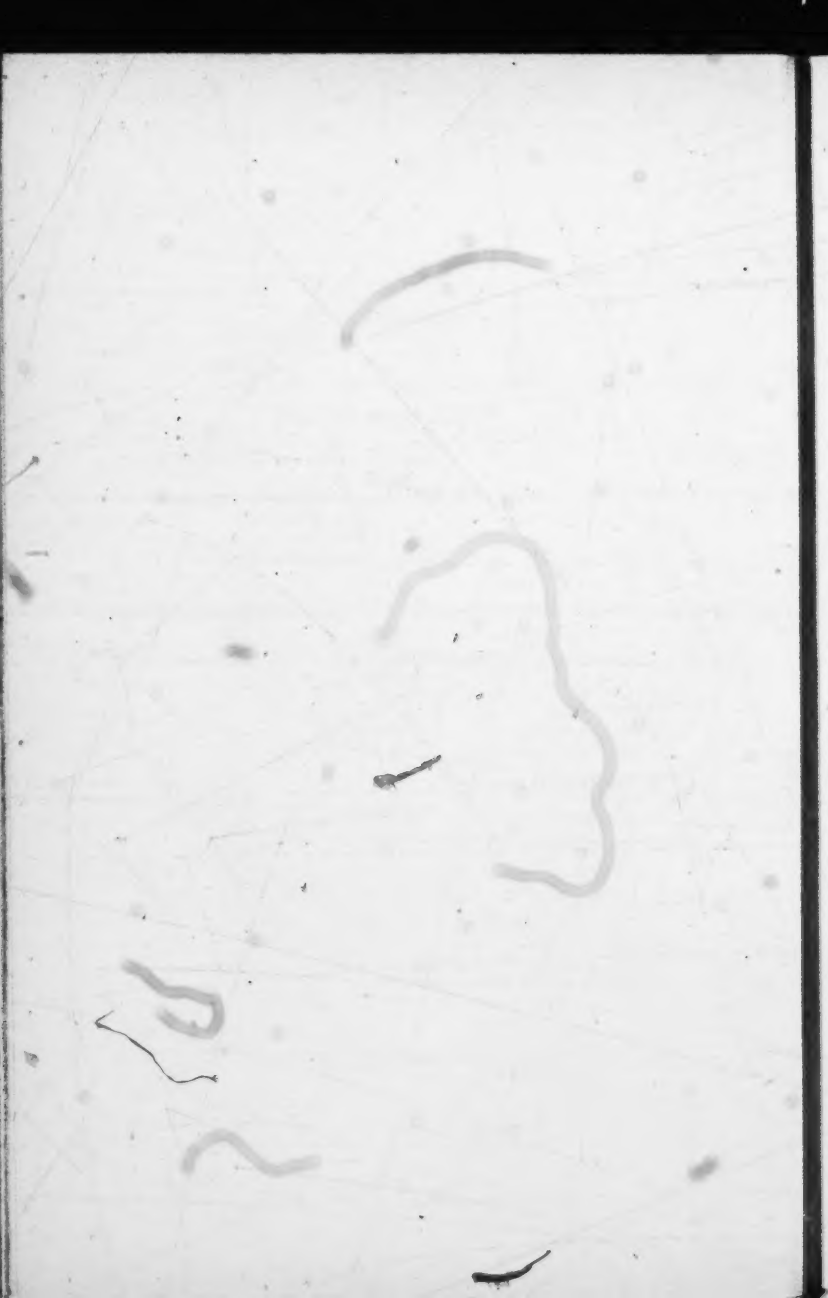
Quincy was clearly a city of importance, compactly built, streets broad and laid out at right angles, well situated to command an immense trade on the Mississippi River and being able to control a very considerable volume of the emigrant business to Denver and the great Santa Fe trail to New Mexico and the newly discovered mining regions along that parallel. Pike's Peak was somewhat of a myth in a past decade; an indefinite locality somewhere in the away beyond. The city evidently came suddenly into prominence, but numerous well-built business blocks and fine dwellings attested the fact that its population deemed itself permanent. The city is the western or river terminus of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad and contained a population by the census of 1860, exceeding thirteen thousand, being the chief town of Adams county. Along the river front or levee, everything was



QUINCEY IN 1862.



GEN. E. E. HEWITT.



bustling activity. No great amount of commerce got above Quincy without paying some attention or tribute to the city, as the river was the only means of communication either up or down.

So well was Quincy understood as the key of the great west that at the time of our visit in 1862, it contained over fourteen thousand inhabitants, and several lines of steam river packets were owned and operated from her port. The city is on a limestone bluff, certainly a solid foundation, about one hundred and twenty-five feet above the river, and is one hundred and seventy miles from St. Louis.

A steamboat was bulletined to leave the next day for St. Anthony's Falls and St. Paul, carrying freight and passengers to those and intermediate points on regular schedule. A clause in the bulletin stated, in effect, that the water in the river above the falls, being then at good stage, passengers and freight could be easily transported to the lakes in Minnesota and the hunting and trapping sections without unnecessary delay and that the portage could be readily made to the head of bateaux navigation on the Red River of the North. This certainly was evidence that we were near the verge of civilization; that the unsbdued native wilderness was not very remote.

West Quincy, opposite on the Missouri side, a ferry landing and initial point of the Hannibal and St. Joe Railroad, was under water, as was the track for a considerable distance, and therefore useless, as this was the usual period of the "spring fresh" in western vernacular; passengers were taken by steamboat to Hannibal, about twenty

miles down the river. This was a pleasant steam-boat ride on almost an inland sea. The pilot paid little attention to metes and bounds, but steered his craft wherever he saw a signal, over what would be dry land at low water period or would poke the boat's nose up into a bluff a mile or more away from the channel, for these boats were flat-bottomed and would float safely in shallow water. The current of the river was strong and increasing in velocity with every inch of rise in the flow from melting snow, covering a very empire away to the north.

Farms along the river bottom were overflowed and dwellings on the shores were deserted; many were removed from their foundations, others half submerged and ready to float off with a few more inches of water. As it was, the pilot dodged several floating houses which were rolling around in and churning the current threatening danger to any craft which came in contact with them. The carcasses of cattle, floating down told the story of their being overtaken and drowned. We were informed that this was an "unusual flood!" This statement was borne out by the fact that floods all over the country were particularly disastrous that year.

Hannibal was reached at 10 o'clock, after three hours' ride, and as nearly everything around the railroad station here also was under water, the work of transferring freight, passengers and baggage—the boat being well loaded—progressed slowly and it was late before the train pulled out and nearly dark before Palmyra was reached about fifteen miles north and west, the junction

with the West Quincy branch road. A very large proportion of the passengers were bound for the plains and the "Far West," but some who wore big slouch hats and goatee whiskers were returning to their homes in Missouri.

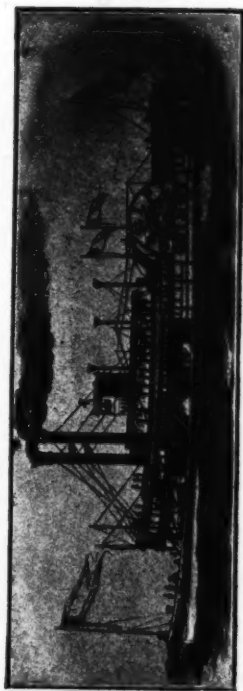
On the steamer our party had its first introduction to United States government officials, detailed to watch the river boundary and who were on the alert to prevent all parties who they might reasonably suspect were designing to join the confederate forces in Missouri or "give aid and comfort" chiefly in guns, ammunition and essential medicines—to the enemy, for the greater part of the state was in turbulent rebellion. Every person's baggage was carefully inspected to the end that no articles contraband of war were to be introduced into the state to the disadvantage of the government; we were all going through the enemy's country. An official government seal was placed on all but hand baggage, and every gun and its owner was carefully scrutinized. This necessary precaution was pleasantly enforced without official ostentation or impoliteness.

An agent for the railroad was on board the boat selling railroad transportation to St. Joe and elsewhere to passengers so as to avoid delay at Hannibal. I had a little suspicion of this sort of itinerant, so sought out the captain of the boat to learn something regarding his reliability; Mississippi river steamboats had the reputation of harboring all sort of sharpers. I found this gentleman to be duly accredited, and so negotiated for tickets, requiring two, one for myself and one for Miss Ellen, the young lady temporarily in my

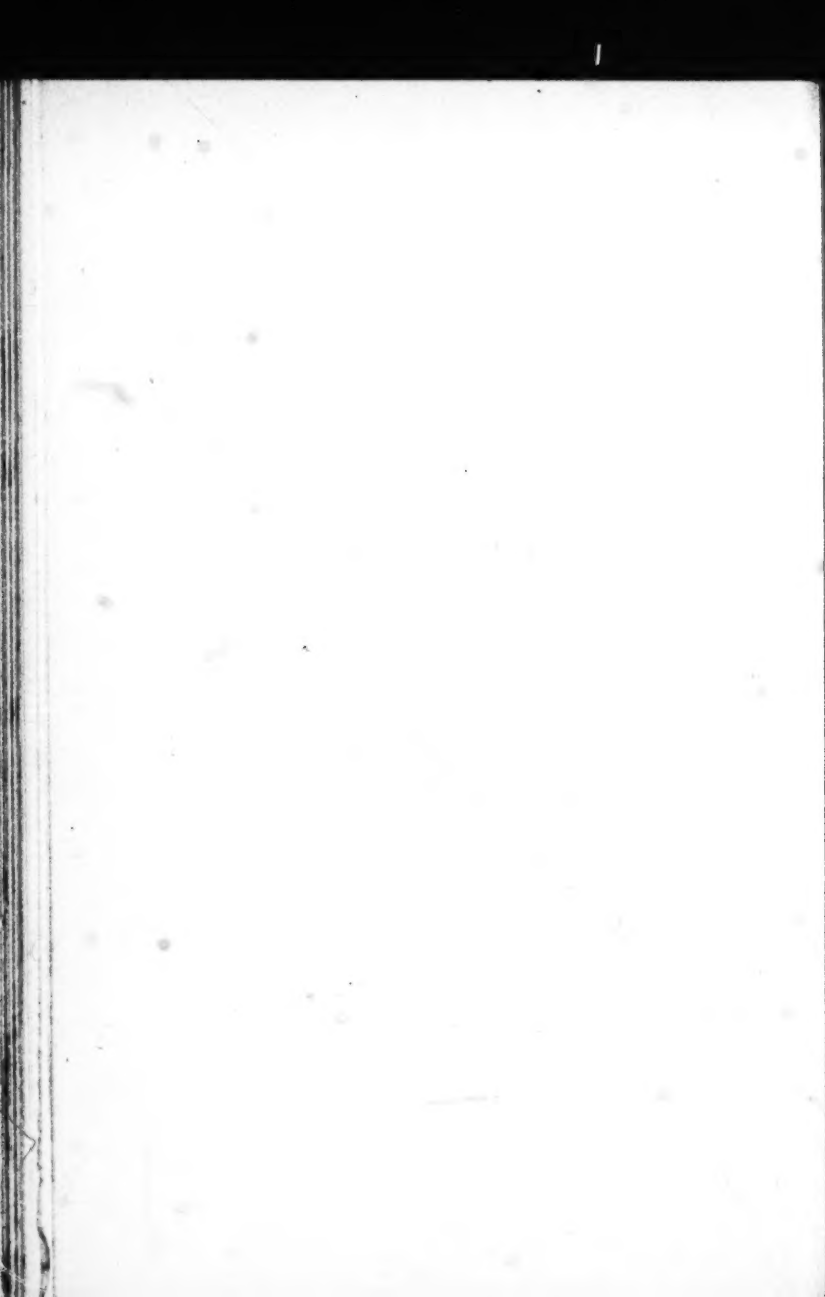
charge for this advance part of the trip. I asked the price for two tickets and received the answer: "Seventeen dollars and six bits for two." The seventeen dollars I understood all right enough, but the "six bits" was new to me. The ticket vender saw my perplexity and explained in true western phrase: "Wall, stranger, I reckon whar you come from down in York state it would be six shillin's." That I understood, as I was from "York state," as he intuitively discovered, and the deal was closed.

All the guns belonging to emigrants and others were required to be checked—a numbered card issued by the train baggage master—and deposited in the baggage car, fifty cents each being charged for the transportation. There were, probably, one hundred and fifty guns on the train, said to have been but a fair average day. That baggage man must have come out a banker in the end.

Hannibal, from the brief opportunity afforded us to survey it, seemed to have been a solid and reasonably go-ahead city, but was very nearly paralyzed then on account of the war; and at one time we were informed had been nearly overwhelmed by the aggressiveness of the sympathizers with rebellion. It is the chief town in Marion County, two hundred miles from St. Joseph, containing at the last census, taken in 1860, sixty-five hundred inhabitants. The city had suffered much from incendiaries during the previous year and a half, the evidence being everywhere apparent, and the inhabitants of the better and loyal class, then in the ascendancy and in authority,



RIVER STEAMBOAT.



freely credited the wanton destruction of property by fire to the secession element which had finally been largely driven out of the city or otherwise suppressed; peace and a measurable quiet prevailed at the time of our brief visit.

At Palmyra we were met by Judge Hewitt, who had found it impossible to obtain mules, or even a single mule at St. Joe that was worth having, owing to the demand for army use, so he returned here. The government needed a great number of them and would accept none unless of the very best order and had decimated that portion of the state around St. Joe of all choice mule flesh in obedience to the army demand. Our needs demanded as good animals as the army required, and to procure them the judge had to retrace his way across the state, as Palmyra was said to be a good market.

At his request I obtained a lay-over check and remained with him to be of whatever assistance required, the other three members of the party going forward. While here I improved the opportunity to look around the city and suburbs and observe matters.

Palmyra is in the centre of a very fertile valley and beautiful district and was a very pretty and attractive budding city, but was given over largely to the southern idea, sympathizing with secession. Especially was this strangely true of the female portion of the inhabitants. An instance can here be related, as it was a part of the "overland trip," and shows what some of the gentler sex are capable of when fully aroused to an occasion with which they may be in entire

accord. The place contained a population of two thousand when the war commenced, and the country around was thickly settled. During our stay here we domiciled at the Planters' Hotel, an excellent house, with broad porches and cool verandas, arranged for comfort in true southern style.

Here at the Planters' Hotel, also, was located the United States Provost Marshal of the district, with an office in the lower front room. Suspended under the expansive veranda was a large American flag, so arranged that an ordinary sized person had to bend somewhat to pass under it. This was purposely done both to attract attention and to impress upon the passer-by what that starry banner stood for. Whenever any of the ladies of the city who were thoroughly imbued with "secesh" proclivities passed that way they invariably turned out into the street, and not infrequently spit at or on the flag as they passed, or picked up some missile to throw at it; the deposits on the streets were none too offensive for finely gloved hands. A hiss was often the accompaniment. The Provost said nothing, but always had his eyes and ears wide open. Two or three miles out of town was a camp of United States soldiers, placed there for the benefit of this community and under orders of the Provost.

A number of men, sympathizers with the south, and too free with their disloyal talk were confined in this detention camp, awaiting the time for them to take the oath of allegiance and be paroled as many had done, or to be otherwise disposed of so they did not augment the rebel army.

Several of these men, as the Provost knew, who declined to go into the Confederate army, had been hooted and hissed out of town by these female viragos. There was no military prison for women nor could they be restrained apparently. To escape this sort of unpleasant attention several young men were in hiding outside the city or had joined the "bushwhackers" or "jay-hawkers" and were becoming buccaneers generally.

About the middle of the afternoon of our second day's sojourn there the Provost quietly said to me that if I wished to witness a sight that would be a lasting memory to be at the railway station when the train came in. He had received the assurance that some of those paroled young men had tired of inactivity and the sneering jests and wordy assaults of their lady friends and were going south to join Price or McCullough. They began to realize the fact that the country was engaged in a real, earnest war, not a filibustering enterprise which would be soon over.

I went to the station as suggested; there were probably from twelve to fifteen hundred persons, a majority women, gathered around the building and crowding the platform, representing the city and the country adjoining. They were generally dressed very nicely, many expensively, and some were handsome young women. The train pulled in, and just before it started out a dozen or more of Mr. Provost's paroled gentlemen moved toward the platform of a car amid the waving of handkerchiefs, feminine cheers, embraces and kisses. Just then a lieutenant and a detail of sol-

diers from the camp appeared and quietly laid hands on the gentlemen and politely requested the young men to accompany them. In an instant bedlam broke loose, and it is a credit to the feminine sex to know that such scenes seldom occur under any provocation. Hoots and hisses filled the air, and ladies of all conditions and appearances made things extremely lively for a few minutes. Not content with hissing and hooting together, with making uncomplimentary remarks about the "abolition government" and its "hirelings," they picked up clods and dirt and any other convenient substance and spitefully threw them at and in the faces of the soldiers and their officers; this offensive showing was not resented.

The poet who wrote "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned" must have had some such occurrence in his mind at the time he wrote. This scene was in the first flush of anger which pervaded several states in rebellion and demonstrations approaching this were not unknown in the north. A friend afterwards informed me that Palmyra, where he resided for some time, became very loyal and sought to forget this noisy and disagreeable episode.

CHAPTER III.

Securing Mules for the Journey—Confederate Money "Did Not Go"—Lonely Sunday at a Wayside Station—Road Guarded by the Military—A Rough Railroad—Arrive at St. Joseph—Hotel & Military Barracks—Appearance of the City and Its Environs—Scourged by the War—A Dirty and Ill Smelling City—Martial Law—First Camp Formed—Military Hospital Causes Much Sickness—The Judge Summoned Back to Illinois—Preparing the Wagon Train—Terrific Thunder Storm—Mounting Guard—Arrival of My Father—Camp Life.

ST. JOSEPH, Mo., May 13.—After a little trouble and many long walks to widely separated farm houses the requisite number of mules were secured, all good and sound, for the judge was an excellent judge, as well, of horses and mules; the cost averaged about seventy dollars each. All were purchased of former secession-sympathizing planters, but all stated as a preliminary to sale that "Confederate" money "did not go;" one man declared that his mule could not be had at any price if he was for the "nigger worshipping" United States government; the judge secured him, however.

Toward evening on the 10th, the animals were placed in a stock car, and the start made for

St. Joseph. This was on Saturday; at exactly 12 o'clock, midnight, our train pulled into Brookfield, an intermediate station on the H. & St. J. R. R., and apparently the end of a division. Here the train lay over until Monday morning, very much to everybody's annoyance. We found this road was strictly a Sunday observer and that no trains moved on that day nor was any business done, irrespective of all pressing necessities. Such a condition of things would certainly delight the heart of a lover of Calvin, or the man who "whipped a cider barrel for working on Sunday."

The city consisted of a good big euphonious name, a small railroad round house, a railroad hotel and a few dwellings, nearly all abandoned by their owners through some war combination which it seemed required these people to move on. Including ourselves, the train crew and the cook at the hotel, there were just fourteen men in Brookfield that dismal Sunday in May, and not a woman or child to be seen. Our amusement consisted in getting the mules out of the car in the morning to feed and water them, in pacing up and down the station platform like English tourists, to while away time, and then the circus in the evening getting those descendants of Balaam's favorite animal installed and secured in the car again. Even a hardened mule was entitled to rest after half a night on that road.

At exactly 12, midnight, on Sunday, the train started from Brookfield. Progress was slow across the state as the war had deranged everything and upset all time cards and railroad calculations. Trains had to move cautiously, as the

country had been successively tramped over and pillaged by all sorts of military organizations or plundering bands, back and forth, in and out: burning and devastating. Between the United States troops, the State militia, detachments of the rebel army, bands of bushwhackers, jayhawkers or other unattached mercenary gangs, the state suffered mercilessly and there was no knowing when one or more of those bodies would make a descent on a community to murder and destroy whatever in a preceding raid had been overlooked. The train stopped at every bridge as a matter of precaution. Nearly every one of these structures had been burned by one or more bands of mercenaries, excepting, of course, the United States troops, and they had been rebuilt under government protection and at each one was stationed a military squad; no train crossed a bridge until the officer in command of the guard reported everything safe. Several of the bridges were but temporary substitutes, built as quickly as possible. A large part of the business of the road was transporting soldiers and army equipments.

The locomotives were "iron clad," the cabs being fortified with boiler or sheet iron, for the protection of the engineer and firemen and to resist any stray bullets that may have been directed their way by some of the many bandits that were sneaking around through the country intent on mischief and murder. Numerous piles of scrap iron, wheels and car materials, scattered along the road, were evidences of the pillage which had been the rule, trains ditched and burned; trainmen were killed and goods stolen or destroyed, if not

carried off. The company's losses reached an enormous figure.

The bridges appeared to be about all there was on the line of the road on grade. The road had been built in 1857-8 to catch the Pike's Peak trade, and it would seem that the ties were only thrown down on the prairie and the rails spiked to them as they lay, leaving grading and ballasting to be done afterwards at a more convenient season, and that period had not yet arrived. The cars were coupled with the old-fashioned links and pins, about three inches of slack, and supplied with the old hand-brakes. The train lurched and jerked along, defying all attempts at rest or sleep—sleeping cars were at this time hardly a figment of a dream. Iron hand-holds were secured to the backs of the car seats to enable the passengers in the seat next to save themselves against too much bumping and jolting.

Apprehensions of possible interruption or disaster at some unprotected spot along the line through willful cussedness or a desire of some marauder to shoot or destroy, and ignorance as to how the ones who had preceded us had fared, did not tend to make this part of the trip any more pleasant, and were nerve-racking enough to banish all thought of sleep, had other conditions been less disturbing. A rougher road than was the Hannibal and St. Joe at that time probably never existed. Those car seats must have ached a long while after passengers vacated them.

The train finally pulled into St Joe, long past the noon hour, on May 12, more than twelve hours from Brookfield. We were hungry and tired, but

so thankful to learn of the safety of all that everything discomfoting was soon forgotten. The advance guard of the party had closely watched the station for many hours impatiently awaiting our arrival.

The assembled family, now consisting of eight persons, were domiciled at a hotel which seemed to be operated under some undefinable restraint and was not in appearance, either inside or out, in first-class condition, or in any way attractive to travelers, yet it was the best house in the city. However, everything looked clear after a little investigation. The establishment had been under surveillance by the military authorities as a place of resort for disloyal sympathizers, and was seized by officers of the government and occupied for a time as military headquarters and the proprietor placed constructively under arrest, if not in reality, as being a public enemy. The house became thereafter a big barracks. In due time it was turned back to the proprietor, and when we stopped there it was being quietly managed by him. It was a large brick structure built during a boom period to accommodate the many guests—adventurers and speculators, flocking into and through the city. To the rear of the main front building was a large annex facing on another street. The connecting passages were closed, the military still occupying the rear portion. The bill of fare for the hotel was pretty near army rations.

A tour around the city revealed much that was entertaining, but not particularly pleasing, owing to the neglected condition of things and the wreck and destruction on every hand. The city had been

one of importance, occupying a commanding place on the Missouri River, both for river commercial advantages and as an outfitting point for the great empire between the river and the Pacific Ocean. During the rush into "Bleeding" Kansas followed by the Pike's Peak exodus and the overland emigration of the southern route, St. Joe had prospered wonderfully and everything boomed according to thorough boom requirements. It was a well-built city with many dwellings and blocks of pretentious business structures. In 1860, it contained a population of about nine thousand inhabitants. It is the county seat of Buchanan County and was laid out and started in 1843.

The breaking out of the Civil War changed all things, and the peaceful commercial pursuits of the past gave way to the excitement and turmoil of military occupation at the time of our visit. About half of the population went elsewhere, encouraged to move on by the military authorities. Martial law was in full force, and matters political and civil were held in restraint by an iron clutch; military rulers are prone to enforce harsh army discipline. The footprints of a ruthless vandalism showed up everywhere, and the incendiaries' torch had been busily applied, as attested by the heaps of blackened ruins on every street and in every block, including the burning of many private residences. Elegant business places, in former days doing an immense trade, some fronting the public park and others near by were used as barracks for troops, store houses for munitions of war and stables for horses; the refuse had been piled on the sidewalks and heaped in the streets to

foment and exhale sickening odors. Ruin and desolation were the only pictures exposed to view, and gave a forbidding aspect to everything. There seemed to be little or no attention paid to purifying the city. The unclean condition of the place was repulsive.

The city had made a costly contribution to war requirements. Illinois troops had thrown up hasty entrenchments at an early day, anticipating a bombardment, which, however, was averted. About one thousand soldiers were, at the time of our visit, encamped outside of the city; a strong guard was also maintained within the city. Citizens with whom we talked expressed the belief that the period of purification by fire and enforced restraint had about ceased and that matters of government would soon be placed on a civil basis entirely. Taxation was enormous, and confiscation of property in consequence was of constant occurrence, for that is what excessive taxation always means. The tax gatherer is ever regarded as a public enemy.

The city is finely situated on the bluffs, from which a magnificent view of the surrounding country was obtained, including a large area of Kansas Territory across the river and a long sweep of the river itself. The little town of Ellwood, immediately opposite, was practically submerged by the Missouri River, and the ferry boat had ceased running. The river was cutting away the flat along the levee at a rapid rate, and bade fair to eat everything away to the bluff. A large and attractive addition to the residence portion of the city was established in a valley back from the

river behind a high ridge, very securely located, safe from the flood. To afford communication between the two sections an enormous cut had been made through this ridge at an expense staggering belief. A Roman Catholic convent perched on top of this ridge close to the slope of the cut looked like a lighthouse on a lonely coast.

Altogether St. Joe was not in her best holiday attire in the early part of 1862, and much in and around the city struck the visitor unfavorably. But her season of discontent passed away in time, and a beautiful city was the result, full of active and ambitious people, intent on gaining a share of the profits accruing in large trade, which surely radiated from that advantageous locality.

What Quincy was to the commercial interests and traffic generally on the Mississippi, St. Joseph was to the Missouri—the "Big Muddy." Everything north of St. Louis designed for the great plains and the inland empire, centered here, and before the war cast its fearful shadow over the state business went with a free hand and prosperity prevailed; of this there was abundant evidence. Boats ran for a thousand miles to the north, penetrating the extreme limit of navigation on the Missouri and the great affluents which drain the vast area west of the Rocky Mountains. I stood on the levee and watched a boat, loaded with all she could carry, push off and puff her way against the rapid current, en route to Fort Benton, far beyond the bounds of the civilized haunts of men.

It developed subsequently that the hotel annex spoken of was a military hospital and occupied to

its extreme limit by sick soldiers, measles being the most prevalent disease, and being "catching" were almost epidemic. This fact was borne in on our little company pretty thoroughly, as was found a little later. Other contagious army diseases were treated there also; an army without a contagious complaint to thin the ranks has yet to be organized.

Camp 1, May 15.—A suitable tenting ground having been selected to-day, we moved out to it and opened out first camp. Here final arrangements were to be made, and all things put in readiness and arranged for the long tramp. The novelty of the affair acted as a sort of a tonic to the party, tho it was a matter of much concern, this starting out to cross the continent. The tent was set up in an ideal place at the foot of a gently rising hill, protected by a clump of burr oaks, and the animals disposed under shade trees alongside of a small flowing creek. This camp ground was in the valley some distance out from the city proper, but near to an enormous brick building occupying nearly an entire block, built for a hotel during the boom and named the Patee House; it was gloomy and wholly untenanted, a relic of misplaced confidence. The big structure looked as lonely as it really was, there being no other building or habitation near it.

Hardly had we got snugly located in camp when a rattling thunder storm broke over the city, drenching things thoroughly. We didn't need the water around our camp for use especially, but the country did, so we made light of the chilly

discomforts, that is, all the light we could. This was our first introduction to a series of storms which detracted much from our little hard earned comforts. The fun of camp life consists in the fun you get out of it, but to be really entertaining does not need to be too long drawn out. Having ladies to do the "housework" everything went along smoothly.

That night Mr. Mullen developed a fine case of measles, precisely as was anticipated. The next morning the hotel people were communicated with, and they willingly requested that he be sent back to the house, where he was cared for and maintained at no expense to him. The measles had come to stay and make a long visit; in good time two others, Mr. and Mrs. Hendee, came down to them; they remained in camp, preferring camp accommodations rather than going to the hotel among strangers, but the proprietor made the same generous offer in their case as was made in behalf of Mr. Mullen.

A physician who had crossed the plains in '52 and knew the remedies required for complaints incident to exposures unavoidable in such a journey and climatic conditions, had made up a liberal line of prescriptions, not forgetting quinine and blue mass, with adequate directions. As our invalids had free access to the medicine chest, they were privileged to select the drugs they thought they most needed and in the quantity to suit; they came through in good style, the disease easily running its full course. The immunes in the party were all right, but this sickness coming on so promptly did not add to the gaiety of camp life.

That same evening the judge received a telegram announcing the serious illness of one of his young daughters, which rendered it necessary for him to return to Dundee at once. Here was a certain delay.

May 16.—Arranging and preparing for a long and wearisome pilgrimage, commenced soon after daybreak. Frames, sustained by strong bows, were built over the wagon beds—"prairie schooners"—fitted so as to be elastic enough to give with the motion of the vehicle, yet strong enough to stand any strain, and covered with good strong cotton drilling, sufficient to keep out the sun and ward off a driving rain. When completed they looked as trim shaped as might be demanded. Not one of the party had ever been fifty miles from home by wagon, so the preparations and working out the details for such an undertaking as here confronted us had to be taken seriously and with some thoughtfulness.

When camp was first made, a show of military routine for the men of the party was adopted, each to take a "trick" of guard duty at night, the first until midnight, the relief until daylight. This precaution was necessary because of the lawlessness which prevailed unrestrained. The arrangement was not for a day or a few days, but to be a continuous performance, for exposure to the dangers of the great plains and predatory Indians came next. Everything not doubly chained and bolted down or red hot was liable to disappear at any time. "Jayhawkers," "Bushwhackers," secret service "agents" and all sorts of nondescript

prowlers abounded and the country all about was pretty nearly denuded of everything portable or mounted on four legs. Especially were horses and mules to be guarded, as the unruly element turned loose in time of war want to move around lively sometimes, or they are liable to be moved forcibly without notice, and need the means of transportation for immediate use.

My watch came on first by allotment this second night. A storm had been gathering head during the afternoon and evening; as a sailor puts his ship in order for whatever comes, so we made preparations to protect ourselves within our limited means. Near midnight the approaching storm was heralded by constant and vivid flashes of lightning and rattling peals of thunder, which increased in intensity as the storm came down over the city from the west with a roar which was a little startling. At 12 o'clock the storm burst with all the electric fury it had accumulated: the thunder crashed and rolled with terrible earnestness, while the flashes of chain lightning and the zig-zag kind chased each other with malignant venom. With each succeeding deafening crash of thunder and blinding flash the poor mules would bray out a faint echo, through fear.

Everything which stood upright seemed to be an illuminated pillar of electric flame, even the mules' ears, for from them a ray of intense light projected upward at a great height at every flash of lightning. The little creek bordering the camp rose suddenly, threatening to inundate the sleepers in the tent, so that a ditch had to be dug promptly and the dirt banked to keep out the

accumulating water. The guard kept away from the trees, having a wholesome regard for the freaks of lightning, but received a thorough drenching. I thought I was tolerably familiar with thunder storms, but this one easily outclassed all previous experiences. A dozen or more places were struck and shattered that night. The wind was light, so there were none of the cyclone elements in the storm.

The next day was cold, damp and cheerless, and mud abounded everywhere. A fire outside a tent under a camp kettle or by a "Dutch oven" afforded scant comfort to dwellers in a floorless canvas house, where everything was wet and muddy without and damp within.

CHAPTER IV.

Our Imitation House—Death in the Family—My Father Joins the Company—Returns Home—A Final Farewell—"Camp Disappointment"—A "Hoggish Episode"—A Visit from Doctor Richard Hewitt—His Rough Life in Missouri—Change of Route—Break Camp—Start for Council Bluffs—Sickness on the Way—The First Wagon Trip—Company Ambulance—A Pretentious Train—A Deserted and Neglected Country—Our First Indians—Raided by Outlaws—Mosquitoes—The Right Road and the Wrong Road—A Discouraged Community—A "Cracker" Outfit—Strange Beings and Strange Mode of Life.

CAMP I, Continued.—Our little canvas imitation dwelling house contained no chairs, tables or camp stools, boxes of stores and trunks serving that duty, defying ease and comfort. It was almost seven months before most of our party saw a chair or dining table again, except in one or two instances, which will be referred to hereafter. While our abode was not very pretentious and had restricted space between its walls, under its roof the company was congenial; it was a home to us, and we congratulated ourselves that if there was not much space inside that homely little dwelling all the rest of the world was on the outside and that should equalize matters.

A telegram to-day announced the death, at Dundee, of the judge's daughter, Carrie, ten years of age; this cast a gloom over our little party and added still further to the uncertainty of the time of departure. As the days passed we became more accustomed to camp life. We would pack and unpack and stow things in the wagons and hitch the mules up for practice, as in a training school; we believed we became quite expert in the art, and complimented ourselves accordingly.

On the 23rd my father, Silas Hewitt, arrived in camp. His presence among us served to give wonderful satisfaction; he entered into the true spirit of the enterprise at once and anticipated pleasures that would in a liberal degree mitigate many hardships. He brought the news of the serious illness of Lucy, the judge's second daughter, which again caused delay and derangement of all calculations. After a few days, when everything seemed settled, my father received urgent letters which caused him to change his plans and reluctantly abandon his trip and return home. I bade him good-bye at the railway station, each wishing the other a safe journey, health and fortitude to endure the trials and dangers to come; that was our last meeting—the farewell words had been spoken. Soon the span of the continent separated us and circumstances which neither could control prevented ever after a reunion.

My father died in 1880, eighteen years after; and if the pearly gates of the unseen world open to any one at death, they surely opened to receive that noble, true, God-fearing, Christian man. He sleeps the sleep that knows no waking. Peace be

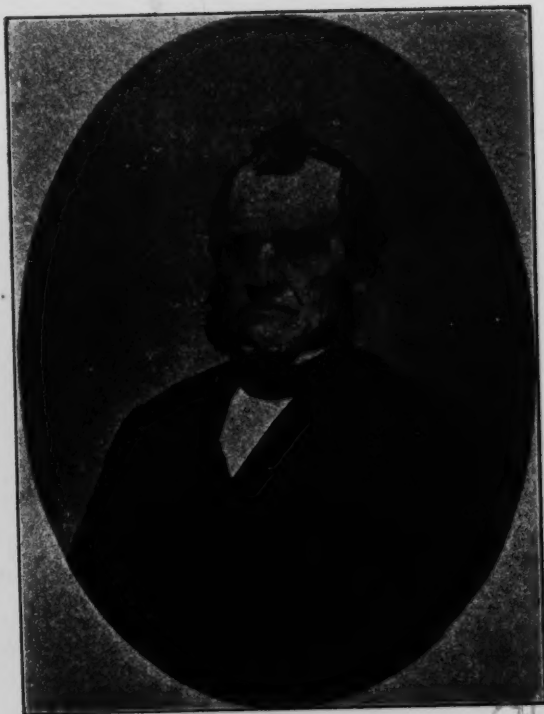
with him! He gave me a fine flexible covered Bible and a good pocket knife the day we parted, and I have them still; I cherish them dearly; the Bible as a rule and guide; the latter not from its worth as a knife alone, but both as last and parting gifts, the last and only things I ever after received from him. "After life's fitful fever he sleeps well!"

In view of the several disappointments we met here, sickness, death and separation, we called this "Camp Disappointment."

An amusing as well as annoying variation in camp life is recorded at this point. The pillaging habit so prevalent everywhere one goes in this country had even entered into the swine which roamed and rooted without hindrance over the prairie about us. The mules were fed an allowance of corn three times a day—we were building up and finishing our locomotives. No sooner was the corn measured out, placed on the ground in the absence of troughs, than a swarm of long snouted, lank shoats would appear and crowd around every mule and "hog" his corn. There would not be one of these incipient stocks of ham and bacon in sight, but the moment the feed was put out they would appear as if dropping from the air or rising out of the ground. This invasion was stood as long as patience lasted and then heroic measures were adopted.

The first attempt to get rid of the marauders was with a good long whip; but one whip on two score of hogs was distributed around too thin, so a double barrelled shot gun was loaded with a moderate charge of powder and a handful of





SILAS HEWITT.

small beans and discharged into the drove. This stung a few of them a little, and after two or three volleys they would grunt and go off. The next feeding time found every hog on hand, accompanied by all of his relatives. Then the gun was loaded with as much powder as was deemed safe and a bigger handful of beans added, and selecting a good range both barrels were given them at once; the charge scattered well, and many were hit hard. They looked up, stopped eating, stuck their ears forward and winked and winked, then every individual tail began to wave in the air, and with one unanimous squeal the whole drove wheeled and made off over the prairie as fast as a long geared hog, used to running, could go, squealing at every jump, disappearing in the distance. I gave them a long range salute when we parted company and that was the last of the hogs around our camp; their flight was permanent, very much to our peace of mind and satisfaction to the mule appetite.

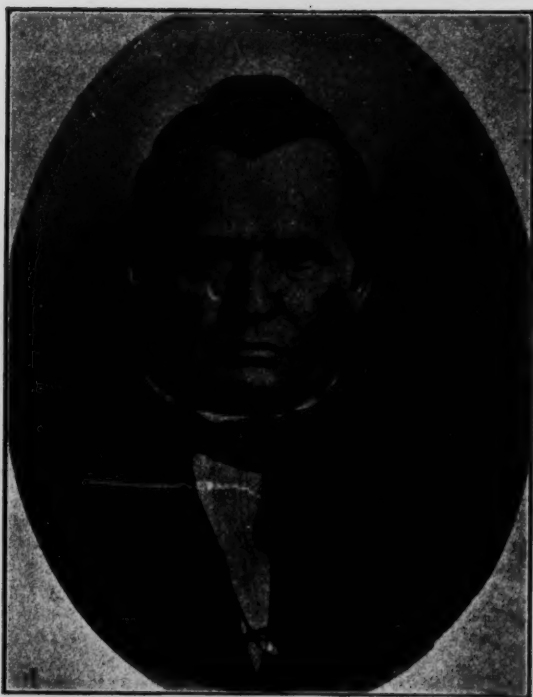
The sun began to get in for summer work today, and the heat was something oppressive; and the mosquitoes! well, New Jersey could do no better.

Behind our sheltering hill to the north, by the sound of the morning and evening gun and an occasional bugle call, we were reminded that a military contingent were quartered near us.

That camp was far enough removed from ours to be entirely safe, and we did not care to establish closer relations. Frequent stations of troops all over the state so far as we had penetrated seemed to be a military necessity.

A visit from Dr. Richard Hewitt, a brother of the judge and my father, was a pleasant variation in our monotonous gipsy life. He was a resident of Independence, Missouri, and learning of the expedition in formation, came up overland to pay us a visit, coming on horseback, most of the way finding his course in the night by the light of the stars the better to avoid roving bands of buccaneers usually masquerading as under legitimate authority, but who looted everything in sight; he had to go around camps of the State militia also, for they impartially looted whatever was left, from friend or foe. About everything the doctor possessed had been taken from him; and for two years while these lawless gangs were roaming, devastating and murdering, his family did not dare to have a lamp or candle lighted at night, it being certain to attract a wandering band of robbers and cutthroats. The doctor enjoyed our camp hospitality for a few days, and then returned home the same way he came, picking his way in the night, but without having the pleasure of meeting his brothers.

Dr. Hewitt had passed a long and laborious life on the frontier as an Indian agent and physician, and was familiar with the wild and lawless characters who preferred to live outside the restraints which civilization imposes. He was a man wholly unknown to fear, and being an unyielding unionist he was a prominent target for every outlaw in his section. For two years or more his practice was among the poor wretches made victims of midnight assaults who had been tortured and mangled because of a love of country. When the



DR. RICHARD HEWITT.

doctor was called out to attend these butchered people—men and women alike—day or night, he was always attended by a sufficient body guard; he was waited upon many times by a gang anxious to hang or shoot him. Finally, by the urgent appeals of his family, to save his life and theirs the doctor secured a military escort and went away from Independence and became surgeon in the United States volunteer army. His family, stripped of everything they possessed, made their way as best they could to Kansas, settling near Wayandotte.

He exacted a promise from me that when I reached the Pacific coast I would hunt up his son, my cousin, Eldridge E. Hewitt, who was somewhere in California, he having gone to that state after his return from the Mexican War in 1849, in which he had served as a volunteer. When I arrived at my destination I was about as far from the son as I was from the father.

These last items are given here as illustrating social conditions in a rebellious community in time of war and to show the indistinct idea prevailing at the time of what the Pacific coast really was. Distances were hardly comprehended. When I found E. E. Hewitt, sixteen years later, he was in Los Angeles, California, where for twenty-five years he was division superintendent of the Southern Pacific Railroad, and no man stood higher in the estimation of his associates than he. He had been all over the Pacific coast, was successively clerk, miner, cattle dealer and merchant, with all the experience of an early business life, in the end reaching the responsible posi-

tion of railroad superintendent. Col. Hewitt died in June, 1895.

The depleted conditions of the markets made the attempt to obtain a variety of viands for the table something of an uncertain undertaking, with indifferent success. Bacon, beans, hard tack, rice and a limited assortment of dried fruits were the regular stand-bys, with an occasional potato, and we could prepare them in any manner high art in cooking could commend; milk was obtained occasionally from a farm house near by "when the cows came up" to be milked; butter was a rarity and able to assert itself when captured.

June 3.—This was one of our busy days and the depression from a heavy damp atmosphere gave way to the bustle of preparation for the caravan to move on. The judge had written to us to abandon the first contemplated route through Kansas, and to proceed at once to Omaha, Nebraska, one hundred and fifty miles up the river, where he hoped to join us. From that point he was advised a military escort was to accompany emigrants through the dangerous Indian country, and as far as necessary beyond the Rocky Mountain divide; that necessity to be determined by the commander of the expedition.

The camp looked as if business was booming. "Camp Disappointment" had lost its charms, and the order "forward" came to us with a musical sound. We left no regrets, only a mussed-up acre of ground and a heap of straw used as bedding.

The first three patients had about worn out their measles, and now, as we were in readiness to

take the road, the fourth of the party, Miss Ellen, gave way to them. One can no more escape measles than the toothache or finally dodge the great reaper. The situation with a prospect of jolting in a wagon over a rough road was not a pleasing prospect for a sick one. The carriage had been turned into an ambulance for the invalids so some imaginary comfort could be anticipated at least, for what with blankets, pillows and cushions and easy springs to the carriage a minimum of jolting seemed assured.

Camp 2, June 4.—Broke camp finally at 10 o'clock this morning for the first drive of the expedition, and soon left behind us the depressing heaps of wreckage and charred ruins, the unsightly piles of refuse and the all-pervading, offensive odors which loaded the atmosphere of St. Joe.

Our little caravan was quite a pretentious affair when out in line on the march. Three wagons, one with two attached and three relief animals leading and one under saddle for emergencies was not a half bad showing, with everything new and in good order.

The country through which the road passed was rolling prairie; not especially charming and but little cultivated; in fact, very much deserted. Toward evening we passed through a place named Savannah, not of very large dimensions, but of evidently large past pretensions. Savannah's population numbered at one time eight hundred, but the number was much less at this time. Here also troops were quartered, said to be here primarily

to keep things quiet, and repress rebellious inclinations or acts, but incidentally to rid the country of horse thieves, raiders and murderers, who construed a state of war to be a license for any kind of wholesale villainy. The military companies scattered over the state in almost every town, if massed, would make a formidable army.

Our first Indians, four of them, splendidly mounted and well armed, passed us in the forenoon. Our dusky friends gave scant notice to us, but they were a novelty just the same, being the first we had ever seen outside of a circus side show, or the wooden images in front of tobacco stores. These were said to be a remnant of the Winnebagoes, whose deeds have long ago gone into Indian tradition and the tribes into oblivion. We drove seventeen miles and pitched our tent in a pleasant spot about 6 o'clock. A good supper was relished; the guard watched while the rest slumbered.

Camp 3, June 5.—We were on the road again at 7:30 this morning. The country was not essentially different from that of yesterday, tho numerous clumps of underbrush impeded progress. Were piloted out of our direct way two or three miles by a fellow traveler, and were obliged to retrace our steps. It was not very difficult to go wrong where side roads were frequent and all look alike, and destitute of guide boards; the natives when appealed to were as apt to direct us wrong as right. The settlement of Fillmore, one of the little villages strewn along the highway, was affected much by old age and decrepitude; was

in a sad state of decay. Out of respect for the eminent name it bears, if not for local pride, it ought to have presented a better appearance. Fillmore's three hundred discouraged inhabitants made a poor showing.

Camp was located on a line between rough country and a broad, beautiful prairie which stretched away off in the distance. There were no means of computing miles traveled, as the people interviewed varied so widely in their estimates; it may have been ten miles or it may have been forty, according to them; we traveled "a good bit" anyhow. But we knew our destination and were confident of arriving there in due time.

The day was intolerably hot and the roads deep with sand and dust; a thunder storm, tho we were only on a ragged edge of it, did not tend to mitigate discomforts, as out in the open, treeless prairie we received the full benefit of the disagreeable humidity. The invalids' experience was even more intense than the rest of the party endured.

However, the beautiful evening made ample amends for the toil of the day, being cool, with a light, refreshing breeze. Resting at night under circumstances we then enjoyed placed animals and man in a condition to commence anew when daydawn should arouse the camp.

Caught glimpses of the "big muddy" but twice as the road led somewhat away from it, besides the great bends in the stream turn it far around at times; to-night it is plainly visible; also hordes of mosquitoes of a robust variety and wonderful appetite. Their industry and musical inclinations call for other modes of expression than taking

notes or reflecting on the day's incidents. Only the smokers are happy, and they are only happy while they smoke, for then the pests take to flight or sting the rest of us in double proportion.

Some strange specimens of human animals appeared in a number of places just out of the city of St. Joe, and along the road to the point which we had reached. The outfits seemed all alike as if made from one pattern, as scrupulously the same as the Chinaman is said to make a garment from new material, exactly like the sample furnished, holes, patches, broken seams and all. Here were a man, a woman, a squad of children, from the baby in the arms to the overgrown, freckled faced, red-haired girl, in exact progression like steps of a flight of stairs; any number of dogs and two old "critters," mules or horses; a swayback wagon covered with some unknown, woven material, looped with bows at the end and sagging in the middle, same as the wagon body, and a single splint bottom chair, secured to the rear of the old wagon. When on the road the one cooking utensil that appeared to be the family equipment, a large iron kettle, was suspended from the coupling bar of the wagon and vibrated to and fro like a huge pendulum ball. One description fits the whole tribe.

The man, tall, lank, ungainly as to gait, unshaven, hair untrimmed, shaggy eyebrows, pants inside of his boots and a well-defined stream of tobacco juice, not down on the charts, trickled from his capacious mouth down over his butter-nut jacket front; head covered with a dilapidated slouch hat. The woman, tall, bony, angular, slat-

ternly, with high cheek bones, expressionless eyes and a complexion which defies description, altogether forbidding; dressed, well yes; clothed, in a way.

The children, several of them great, hulky boys, with mops of uncombed, matted hair of varied but pronounced hues, polka-dotted, tallow-colored countenances, and barefooted; the girls exact counterparts, only more so if that were possible; the poor old animals on the verge of collapse and ready to lie down at any time either on the road or when camp was made; the dogs, big and little, a mongrel set of barking, snarling curs, in numbers enough to fill an Indian rancherie.

This was the specimen "cracker" from North Carolina and East Tennessee, a kind of unidentified product, evolved evidently, the good Lord only knows from what, where, when and how. The tribe are most of them nomads, nearly always on the road, roaming somewhere, but generally traveling one direction one season and returning the next, remaining in one place only long enough to "make a crap," and then packing up to get into some other locality to do the same thing over again the following season. The breaking out of the war had closed the avenues they were familiar with between the north and the south, west of the Alleghany Mountains, and as a consequence they were completely stranded, and having made an indifferent "crap" in Missouri in war times they seemed at a loss to know where to go next. As they did not fit in anywhere in the economy of nature, the prospect for future prosperity seemed to be like the x in algebra, the unknown quantity.

Their home was a wagon, their recreation ground the universe; their only pathway through life the great public highway. They were not desirable camp acquaintances, tho generally rated as harmless.

CHAPTER V.

Continued Desolation—Perversity of Mule Nature—
Missouri Snakes—Degrees of Comparison—
Mound "City"—An Ambitious Name—A Prairie
Saloon—Obtaining a Lime for the Invalid—A
Pleasant Memory—My Last Dime—An Expla-
nation—Heat Stifling—Decaying Villages—
Dwellings and Mills Burned—Pleasant Neigh-
bors—The Locust Scourge—Crossing the State
Boundary Line—Entering Another Realm—
Refugee Settlements—Mosquitoes Galore—Pa-
cific "City"—Heavy Roads—Prosperous Towns
—Omaha in Sight—Arrive at Council Bluffs—
Visit Old Acquaintances.

CAMP 4, June 6.—Our course to-day lay through a country alternating between great stretches of rolling prairie and heavily timbered hills. Passed many uncultivated fields overgrown with stalwart weeds which grew close enough together to offer serious impediment to rabbits running freely through, and with foliage dense enough for birds to roost in securely; where fences were down; dwellings deserted, wrecked beyond repair, or their former location only indicated by the remains of a blackened chimney; barns gone up in smoke, and an appearance of desolation generally; the cruel scars of war everywhere. Inquiry developed the fact that their former occupants had gone to or away from war

without much delay; frequent visits from gangs of midnight raiders were accountable for the rest.

The perversity of the mule kind to want to go right opposite to where you wish him to causes inconvenience sometimes; on occasion one or two had gotten loose and gone back promptly to the last previous camp, maybe further on; then a ride back became necessary to capture the derelict. This evening another, one of the gender you would call Jennie or Josie if it were your dog, withdrew from camp life; after a hot ride of a mile she was surrounded and brought back. These events are only little things on the side and expected, adding zest to matters of more import.

Streams of good running water were abundant enough, but when water was wanted for drinking or cooking a spring was sought. A large cool one could always be found near an occupied dwelling. Passing a place this afternoon where half a dozen red-headed urchins were swinging in wild grape vine branches, and whooping with the exuberant zest of youth, I made inquiry for the family spring; one of the boys answered in good Missouri tones, pointing down a slope to the bottom of a ravine: "Down thar by them thar rocks!" I went down among the rocks to the place indicated and found a splendid spring; the largest "rock" in sight was hardly the size of a base ball; of such are names and degrees of comparison in the "far west."

Crossing Terkio River, a stream of some pretensions—not wide nor swift, but deep—by an uncertain bridge, we soon passed through Mound City. Always speak well of a bridge when safely

over it. The mound was there, large and prominent; the "city" was doubtless on the map and probably kept from view or was incubating in some promoter's mind. In this year of grace it consisted of a grocery, a saloon, a blacksmith shop, a penstock, a watering trough and an ambitious name; of dwellings we saw none; they may have been hidden behind the mound or a growth of young burr oak timber near it.

I examined the best I could for evidence of fish in the river, but found no encouragement. Asking a rustic about it I got this answer: "Naw, they ain't no fish in them water!"

The invalids had suffered much from the intense heat to-day which was reinforced by clouds of little, insinuating, hungry flies. The patients were gradually gaining strength, but "all the comforts of a home" were purely in one's imagination. Miss Ellen, with an invalid's natural longing for something to relieve a feverish condition, was overheard to express a wish that she had a lemon, with no thought that such a thing was obtainable; without other intimation I went into the saloon prospecting for one. The establishment was not as pretentious as its relative in the Hoffman House, being a rough board structure with a dirt floor, but it contained some bottles and decanters of liquid, a rude counter fronting a shelf on which were a milk-clouded mirror and the required glasses. On top of one of the upturned glasses was a lone lime about the size of a walnut. I entered into negotiations for that lime, explaining that it was for an invalid lady belonging to a passing emigrant train, and who was suffering

from measles, aggravated by the heat; the saloon man let me have it when I offered a dime for it. That little coin was the last money I was possessed of, but I parted with it cheerfully, and for the pleasure it gave to two persons, I have ever after cherished a kindly memory of Mound City.

A word of explanation as to how I got down to that dime. My father had lost about all his possessions by two fires and a flood, and after the last calamity there was but little left for him or his family. One of the fires, the last, was caused by Hampton's Black Horse Cavalry, at Fairfax Court House, Virginia, early in the war. The regiment watered their animals at a pump my father had placed in a deep well in the court house grounds, and then wantonly destroyed the pump and fired the storehouse, containing a large number of them. When my passage was arranged for this journey, and the few necessities required while beyond the borders of civilization were gotten together, I had just ten cents left on this 6th day of June, 1862; it went cheerfully for that lime. My interest had been entirely identified with my father's, and so I shared with him the culmination of these disasters, and then went out into the world.

My father had invented and patented early in the fifties the first deep well pump in the United States. He was manufacturing them previous to the war, and had placed some of them in the deep wells of Fairfax County, Virginia, and had others on storage when the war interrupted all business matters and their destruction resulted, and his business ruined. He declined making a demand

against the government for the loss of property, deeming it a part of his contribution to the casualties of war.

The road from the "city" was around next the hills to avoid the bottoms which were more or less affected by the high water in the river and made practically impassible for wagons. Our camp was fixed in a convenient place, having due regard for wood, water and feed and dry ground to sleep on. Determined efforts were made to rid camp of the eternal, exacting mosquito which were not altogether successful, tho we lessened their number considerably.

Camp 5. June 7.—An early start was determined on for this and each succeeding morning, when possible, so as to be enabled to make a good stop at noon to rest the animals and give the party a needed respite from the mid-day heat; so we were on the road at 5 o'clock and made a decided advance. Even at that hour Old Sol got his heating apparatus focused down on our road, and by 10 o'clock things were just grilling, but we trudged along, stopping occasionally for a few moments when an inviting clump of trees offered cooling shade, which was all the comfort we got along that road, as the air was surcharged and up to fever heat.

Passed the villages of Rockport and Linden through which our road led; they both bore pretty names, but each showed the impress of the decay and ruin which pervaded the other places along the route. These settlements being the reflex of the country, of course, showed the same condition

of neglect; both were nearly abandoned. Made a brief halt at Rockport for refreshment and instituted some inquiry as to the cause of so much ruin and stagnation. The same story, uncompromising conflict between unionists and disunionists. The unionists seemed to have the best of it so far as retaining hold of their homes even in a devastated country was concerned, because they could recover in time, but before they departed the lawless class managed to inflict great injury by burning dwellings and outbuildings and running off stock, not hesitating to maltreat women and commit murder.

Every community had its local flouring mill. These, without exception, were all destroyed by one gang or another which overrun the country, from a purely devilish motive. Flour and meal, as all mill products, had to be obtained from long distances, largely shipped in from Iowa by slow freight wagons. One gentleman took great satisfaction in pointing out the place where a noted guerilla leader had been killed a short time before, together with two outlaws of lesser note, who were with the chief, after a raid into the town for loot.

Camp was made this evening, by invitation, near the dwelling of a gentleman who esteemed it a pleasure to show our party, entire strangers as we were to him, a generous hospitality. Some good things obtained from his family stores were relished with satisfaction by those who had been held down for days to bacon and beans, and were especially appreciated by the convalescents. It is particularly pleasing to record such disinterested

feeling. Very little could be obtained from a country, stripped as this was by constant raids and forced levies. We received calls from a number of neighbors while camped near them, and found them kindly and hospitable; the evening routine was much relieved. These settlers had seen so much of recent military display and insolence that they welcomed travelers very heartily. Some of the visitors gave entertaining reminiscences of their experience with Mormon trains which passed this way from St. Joe to Kanesville twelve or fourteen years before.

A railroad, projected to connect Council Bluffs, St. Joe and other cities lower down, was undertaken about the time the war commenced, parallel to the river, to be called the Platte Valley Railway. Great piles of ties were strewn along the road we passed over, and in many places grading had been done; but all work had ceased; the war paralyzed all business but that of providing military supplies. The piles of ties were on the disappearing gun order, "now you see them, now you don't."

Camp 6, Sunday, June 8.—Time being a primary object and destination still a long way off, we continued our travels to-day. The road was laid along the foot of a steep, high bluff most of the way, along the rim of the "river bottom." The flood waters in the river send vehicles back a long distance, and even that does not always avert trouble or miring in sloughs of deep, sticky mud.

Crossed the Nishnabottana River—a delightfully long drawn out Indian name—on a bridge about as long as the name given the river, and soon

thereafter passed the narrows, a neck of land but a few rods in width which separates that river from the Missouri. Along the singular peninsula one might easily toss a stone into either river from the driveway. The bed of the river with the long name is lower than the Missouri, and with quite a stiff current. The streams run parallel to each other nearly fifty miles, varying in the distance which separate them, but they finally get together. In storm season this river evidently carries a heavy body of water. A little town near by with the same elongated name contained about four hundred and fifty not over-prosperous inhabitants, a pack of sneaking looking dogs and a boy for each dog came out to see our train go by.

In addition to many other pests which had overrun and desolated the country, the scourge of Egypt, the locust, appeared this year and did immense damage. Myriads of the ravenous insects swarmed among the trees and shrubbery, and their humming made unpleasant music; the wheels of the wagons crushed thousands of them and the odor was offensive and heavy. They moved around lively in their hunt for food, and whatever they touched withered. The country for some distance around was also infested with them, to its great injury. Whatever the numerous bands of night-riders left of other things than fence rails and cobblestones, the locusts would cover and devour without delay.

Crossed the boundary line this morning between Missouri and Iowa, and it seemed very soon like passing into another realm, the contrast was so pronounced. Farms were carefully cultivated,

dwellings and outbuildings looked neat, and a general air of contentment and thrift could be distinguished. What Missouri had been and still was contributing to the spirit of secession was a fearful total to contemplate. Iowa, the home of freedom, fared otherwise, except, perhaps, immediately along the border. It took years for Missouri to recover, but she came out grandly in the end.

A number of hastily improvised settlements of abnormal proportions, resembling camps of railroad builders or canal diggers more nearly than permanent settlements, were noticeable so far as we penetrated into Iowa. The presence of men was sadly disproportionate to the number of women and half-clad children; the wonder was explained by the statement that these little mushroom settlements were composed of secession sympathizing refugees from Missouri; moved over into Iowa for better security of the women and children, while the male portion of the household went to war or were out "rustling."

This accounts to a considerable extent for many of the deserted places in the country through which we journeyed. It would appear to be something more than assurance for men to take their families to a state where safety was guaranteed and then themselves return to make war on the government that was protecting their families.

Camp number six was situated in a beautiful spot at the base of the bluffs; to the west, dimly defined, was the big river. In the rear of our camp was a singular formation of nature, consist-

ing of a crescent-shaped hollow in the high bluffs with walls like a frowning fortress, and we appeared a miniature army within the enclosure. Two peaks, one at either end of the circle, stood like grim sentinels and the clear moonlight added the appearance of reality to the allusion. Several other emigrant outfits, outward bound, like ourselves, were enjoying the comforts of this camping location alongside of us. The savage horse fly and swarms of gnats during the day and industrious mosquitoes at night caused uncomfortable sensations to travelers and animals. A brush smudge induced the last-named pest to present his bill at some other station, and was the only relief the tormented animals had. Swollen faces, blotched as if broken out with some disfiguring disease, attested the attentions received from these annoying pests.

Camp 7, June 9.—This night we located our one-stand home in "Pacific City"—a high-sounding name truly, but what's in a name when other things are equal? This "city" was of ephemeral growth, founded in boom times when prospective railroad building excited speculation and everything else into feverish activity. When the end came with the appearance of the war cloud, Pacific City slumped and did it hard; corner lots at top-notch prices could not sustain it; the boomers of the embryo city sought other pastures, and, perhaps, other lambs to fleece.

Conditions around the farming sections showed improvement; orchard and grain fields were in excellent condition, while cattle and horses were

safe property; those who cultivated the soil took pride in their occupation.

A long drive over the wrong road took us out of the way and led us into an overflowed district and a very bad slough, slushy mud and a good deal of it. Got through all right and the experience was not without its humorous side; a frisky mule, or two frisky mules, can afford a deal of entertainment on occasion; a mule is a humorous beast when he really sets out to be, and gets into action. As soon as our train would get out of the deep mud we immediately plunged into deep and stifling dust; and so we alternated all day. To add to it all the rays of the sun were intensified to a degree that made everybody long for a shady nook, cooling drinks, big fans and other comforts not to be had by the mere wishing.

Camp 8, June 10.—The road through the bottom was so far submerged this morning that we were forced a long way out of a direct course, across the bluffs and over a heavy hill into the open country; and then through the delightful little village of Glenwood. This was much the prettiest place we had so far seen. It was snugly seated between the hills and fitted its name perfectly; was in good repair, looked bright, contained several fine churches and a large public school. A troop of noisy children at play in the school grounds made one think that everything in and around Glenwood was conducive to peaceful pursuits, contentment and happiness.

A drive of a few miles and Bellevue was reached and Omaha across the river on the west

bank came in sight; we floundered through a low, marshy section, drove around a hill and Council Bluffs also appeared a short distance beyond. The sight of these several places revived the whole party, especially seeing Omaha, our objective point; even the animals seemed to take in the encouraging situation and quickened their pace with little urging.

The city of Council Bluffs, which was reached about 10 o'clock in the forenoon, was active, and the parks of freight wagons outside her gates and the throngs of all manner of vehicles in the streets gave sure indication that business had reached a high mark. The inland freighting was all done by wagons; the mails and passengers came in by stage, as there was no railroad into or through Western Iowa. The river was the main artery of trade; the city is one thousand miles from St. Louis by the river. In 1860, the population was only two thousand.

An old story kept in active circulation for many years described a stage trip across Iowa, as engaging a seat, paying one's fare, putting your grip in the stage boot, then walking and carrying a rail to pry the stage out of the mud. Our experience among the Iowa sloughs leads us to think that the story was not wholly a poet's fancy.

Mr. D. C. Bloomer, a lawyer of ability, formerly of Seneca Falls, New York, and his esteemed wife, Mrs. Amelia C. Bloomer, famed as one of the first and most forcible advocates of woman's rights, had removed to Council Bluffs in its early days, once known as Kanessville, originally a Mormon settlement, and were there, as



OVERLAND STAGE.

they had been all their lives, closely identified with every progressive movement.

As I had been "devil" in the office where "The Lily," Mrs. Bloomer's woman's rights paper, was printed for some years, and was well acquainted with both her and Mr. Bloomer, I took a short leave of absence and sought them out in their handsome frontier home. I was cordially received and passed a pleasant half hour with the famous advocates and writers; they had lost none of their activity and earnestness in all matters pertaining to the advancement and good of mankind, tho always a long way ahead of their times and generation. They were of the kind of people whose influence is ever for the right, who leave a generous impress of good wherever known. To Mrs. Bloomer has been improperly attributed the origin, in the fifties, of the short dress skirt and trousers for ladies, styled "Bloomers." She was not the original promoter of that form of garb, tho wearing and advocating it for some years.

Our stay in Council Bluffs was of so brief a period that no time was allowed to look the city over; all we saw of it was but a superficial glance as we passed through the streets and down to the ferry landing, but enough was revealed to emphasize the conclusion that the public business and mercantile affairs of the city were controlled by an energetic and ambitious class of men.

CHAPTER VI.

Crossing the Missouri to Omaha—A Bridge Not Dreamed of—A Good Camp Ground—A General Survey of Omaha—A Young But Stirring City—Capital of Nebraska Territory—A Great Camp—Outfitting Depot for Emigrants—Omaha Then and Now—A Mormon Starting Point—From Omaha to the "Great American Desert"—The City Past and Present—Haunting the Post-Office—The "Carnival of War"—Poorly Provisioned Emigrants—The Geographical Situation—An Immense Area—Final Arrangement for the Journey—Not a Holiday Excursion—An Immense Emigration in 1862—Gigantic Strides—The Scene Changes—A Great Transformation.

JUNE 10, Continued.—Crossed the river by steam ferry, paying three dollars and fifty cents for the privilege. The boat's nose was poked up against some hidden embankment known only to the pilot, probably high out of the water when the river is at low stage. Two short masts, one on either side, marked the place where the landing evidently was and the road ought to be; there we were dumped off the apron, and from thence forded the flat about a quarter of a mile through water nearly three feet deep to high land and the city of Omaha.

Spanning the river from bluff to bluff over this

watery way threaded by us long ago, connecting the two cities, now stretches the magnificent bridge erected by the Union Pacific Railroad at a cost of some three million dollars. In 1862, if one had suggested the possibility of a structure like this over that great river he would have been deemed a visionary, a dreamer, and his sanity doubted; but time and a broadened national life have wrought out astonishing problems, in mechanical and engineering lines, and this grand bridge is one of those triumphs, leading the way for others still greater which closely followed.

Located camp eight as the evening shadows began to appear, on the bluff overlooking the river a little to the north of the city, a short drive from the centre thereof, not far from the territorial capitol building and in close relationship to a large, flourishing brickyard; six days from St. Joe.

A gentleman whom we met as we entered the city very kindly directed us to the place where our camp was made, and we found it in every way a pleasant place to stop at, fully up to assurances and expectations.

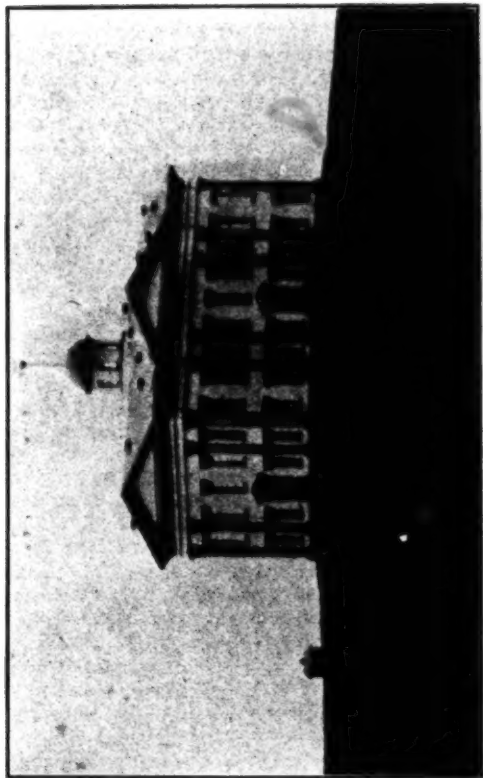
A cool, refreshing breeze from over the river was a delightful change and had a wholesome effect in keeping down the pestilent mosquito. The faint glimmer of distant lights on the river and the hoarse, intermittent breathing of engines indicated that a steamboat was laboriously making her way up the river against a current which resolutely disputed every inch of her right of progress.

June 11.—The first thing this morning soon

after daybreak was a hasty cup of coffee and a cracker and then a start for the post office with high hopes of letters from the ones remaining behind. The postmaster saw no necessity for wasting time in merely serving the public and did not open his place until after 8 o'clock. But as there were no letters for our party, he might have kept his office closed all day, or the rest of the week, so far as we were interested. It wasn't much of a post office anyhow!

A walk around the city was next in order; sort of voyage of discovery. Nothing could be imagined that would improve on nature in the site of Omaha; its location seemed ideal, being on the river bluff, a beautiful and commanding situation. The city is laid out with regularity, well planned and built, containing many fine residences and spacious business establishments and several large churches and school houses; the latter were particularly commodious and noticeable. It was an important city in 1862, in that above Omaha and Council Bluffs there was no other place of commercial importance on the Missouri River, or near it, and as this then was the last "jumping off" point it was the final opportunity for emigrants to obtain needed commissary supplies and put wagon trains in order. From Omaha the plains—from the plains the mountains. The finger board points ever to the westward. Omaha was the last of a chain of western cities to take its turn as an outfitting depot for the overland emigration.

It seemed a very active city, and well it might, as the streets were thronged with emigrant wagons and the shops with a multitude of people



NEBRASKA CAPITOL.

who were purchasing things requisite for a long journey through a country where the necessary requirements of life could not be obtained. Freighters were there, too, in great numbers, loading stores for distant trading posts in the interior and Indian reservations and for trading by the way. Furnishing Indian reservations and supplying annuity goods was one of the biggest and most profitable things in the west, operated by a close corporation.

Omaha was the capital of Nebraska Territory and the legislative hall was a spacious structure for the period, situated on a slightly eminence overlooking a vast area of undulating country. The view from "Capitol Hill" was truly magnificent, and the panorama unfolded to the view in all directions was expansive and grand. The river could be seen up stream and down for miles. While the neighboring city, Council Bluffs, was directly opposite on the east bank of the river a great bend was made that separated the steamboat landings about twelve miles apart; and with a swift current running it took a long time for a steamer to make the distance against it.

From Capitol Hill also countless tents and white-covered emigrant wagons were in view, covering the whole country around the city like the tented hosts on the plains of Jerico. Numerous trains of pilgrims, all like ourselves, bound for the new El Dorado, could be seen wending their way over the hills to the west and passing on beyond one's vision. A little further removed from the city was the encampment of the military assignment, a miniature army designed and fur-

nished by the government as an escort for emigrant trains through the country inhabited by predatory Indians.

The incoming and outgoing of these emigrant trains continued uninterruptedly; the number of emigrants did not lessen as the days went by, merely changed. Thousands of emigrants had already gone forward and other thousands were constantly arriving and preparing to follow. Parties, or trains, as the case might be, were made up here and a sort of protective organization effected on limited military lines with captains, guides, wagon masters and guards, for in union, in this instance, there was strength and uniformly safety from attack, if a company were strong enough to show a probability of effective resistance. It was but inviting disaster to go single handed or in small companies.

A number of prospecting tours around among these several camps within ready reach brought out many an interesting thing to us new beginners and also revealed heretofore unknown traits of human character, clearly exemplified as the various sorts of people assembled or combined together. It was a good experience, profitably acquired. Some of the peculiarities noted on these little excursions from our camp assumed other characteristics later on ere the journey was concluded, as will be mentioned hereafter. All sorts and conditions of people were congregated here.

The most of these emigrant trains had oxen for motive power, and they would combine together in large companies; horse and mule outfits did the same. It was not an unusual thing for a single

train to start out with fifty or seventy-five wagons, tho the greater number had less than thirty. This meant from two to four yoke of oxen to the wagon and an average of six persons.

A few miles up the river above Omaha the Mormons had established a landing, entirely limited to their own kind and faith, at a place called Florence, so there was little in common between the two classes of people who started from the river for the journey over the plains. Thousands of these Mormon recruits, proselyted in foreign lands, annually passed through this place on their way to the Mormon kingdom, emigrants in a double sense, and as undesirable as they were numerous; they did not belong to the country or affiliate with its people nor speak its language.

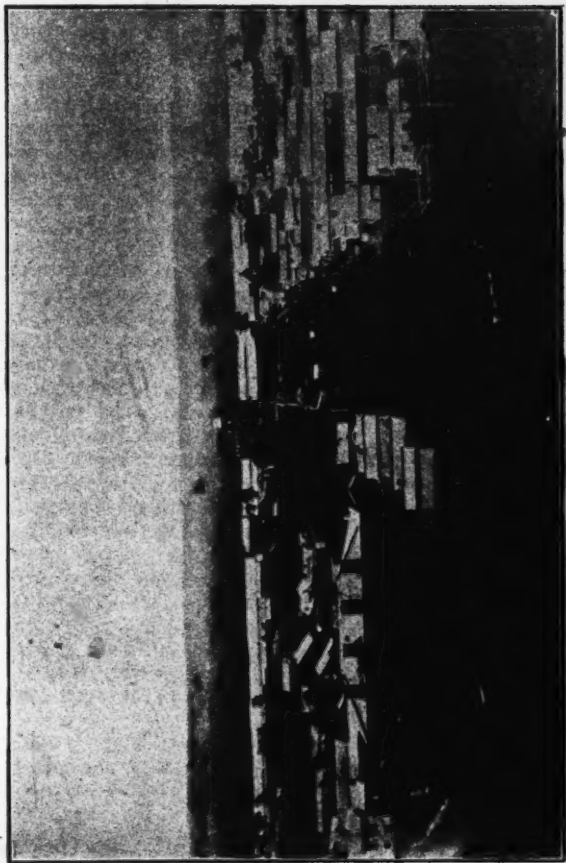
Our camp here was maintained for seven days, and each day saw some of us haunting the post office for letters, but none came. We passed the time as comfortably as circumstances and an uneasy feeling of isolation would permit. The train was in the hands of young, inexperienced people headed out into a region none of us had any conception of further than what imagination could conjure up from the meagre knowledge one could glean of its vast extent, its mysteries and its dangers. The reflections were not comforting, the realization disquieting.

Inquiries did not always bring satisfactory results. I procured maps which proved more or less inaccurate and guide books which only served to make confusion worse confounded, but studied them earnestly. As a rule guide books must be considered carefully and then acted upon gener-

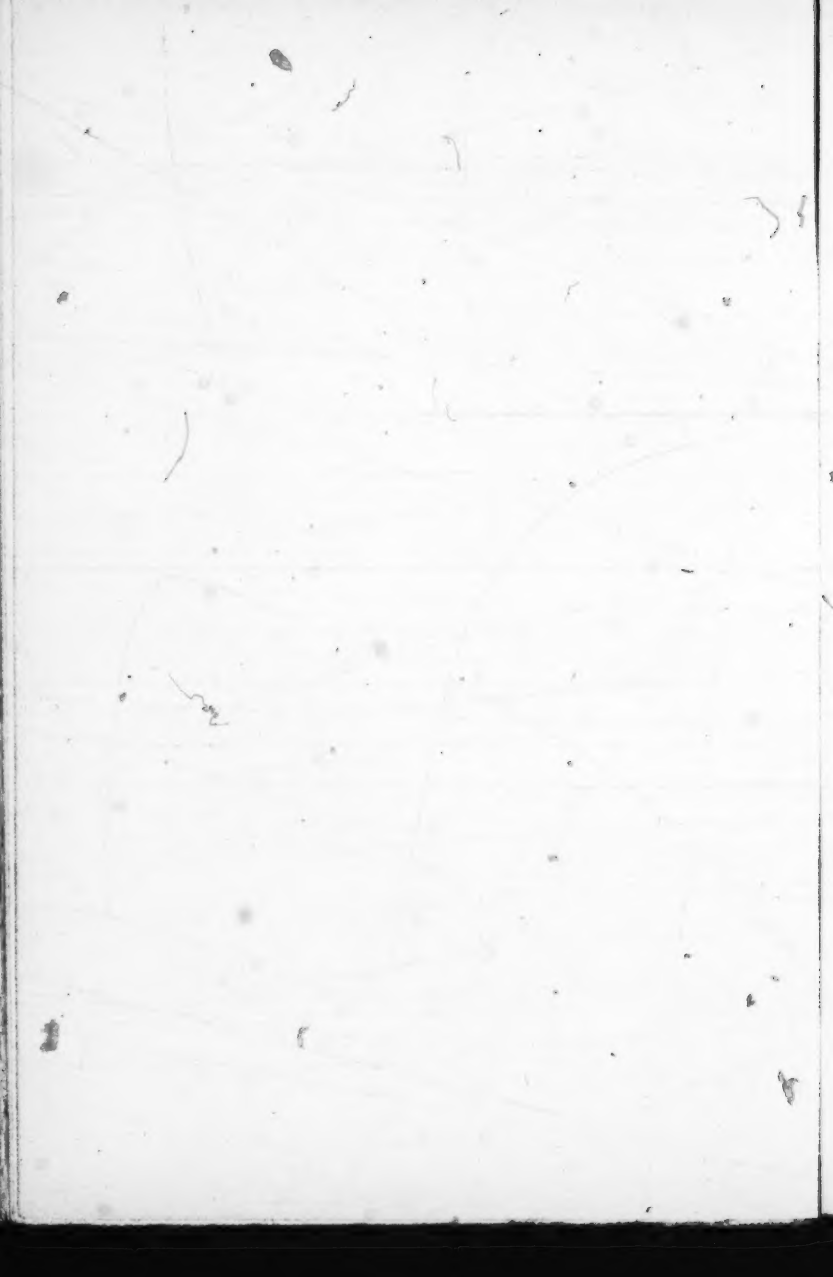
ally the opposite to what is advised. Like poor "Lo" in the melancholy school library books, we were going to "set our faces toward the setting sun," and as long as we continued moving westward, we knew we could not go far wrong and would bring up somewhere at the end.

We procured a full supply of bacon at Omaha, about three hundred and fifty pounds, to add to our larder. It was in great slabs, the whole side of a hog, the only way it was then prepared. It was selected from a warehouse which often contained a stock of one hundred thousand pounds or more. We added two extra barrels of flour as a precaution. While rough and uninviting in outward appearance, the bacon was thoroughly cured and in prime order. A few other essentials were added, a limited supply of "snake bite" remedy included, and we were ready for the journey. No excursionist or fisherman could be deemed assuredly safe without a package of guaranteed "snake bite" cure.

War news, from the morning of our departure from Quincy, Illinois, was very limited, but little could be had. Telegraph facilities were meagre; the western press bureau was probably not fully organized; perhaps, too, military censorship in Missouri had something to do with it; there were no daily papers to be had and the newspaper race for news in the "wild and woolly west" had not developed as in later days. Our stock of war news was chiefly limited to what we saw and heard among the communities in Missouri where martial law prevailed, and publications were limited or entirely suppressed. The "carnival of



OMAHA IN 1862.



war" was in a considerable measure a sealed book to us.

The headlong impetuosity of people getting ready for the overland journey gave them little time to linger around places where war news could be had, tho the old flag was everywhere floating in the breeze. A great number of these people were only half ready for the journey when the real start was made; they afterwards paid the penalty of improper haste and improvidence.

Omaha was but nine years old. It was founded in 1853, and the first building erected. The first legislature, after the organization of the territory, met here in the winter of 1854. The city has an elevation of nine hundred and sixty-six feet above sea level; this, taking the distance to the Gulf of Mexico as one thousand miles in a direct line, makes the descent to the Gulf a fraction less than one foot to the mile; by the river, of course, the distance is far greater. In 1860, Omaha contained a population of eighteen hundred and eighty-three; two years later it perhaps contained a little over two thousand. It is the county seat of Douglas County.

To obtain a more comprehensive idea of the geographical lines of the country through which this prospective journey lay, and its immense proportions, one should consult a map of that period, forty years ago. The southern boundary of the territory of Nebraska was the 40th parallel; the northern boundary the 49th parallel, separating it from the British Possessions; the eastern boundary was the Missouri River, and the western limit the imaginary line of the crest of the Rocky

Mountains. Adjoining on the west was a part of Utah; all the remaining territory was included in the original territory of Washington. The two Dakotas, Wyoming, Idaho and Montana were created subsequently, as also was Yellowstone Park out of Nebraska and Washington, the former principally, as the territory originally existed. Nebraska was made a territory by Congress, May 20, 1854, and at that time embraced an area of three hundred and fifty thousand square miles. The map, printed as part of this memoir, is worthy of careful study and is suggestive of the immense area within the limits of Nebraska. On the map also is traced the line of our journey, which will enable the reader to form a clear idea of the country.

But very little of Nebraska had been surveyed, a tier of counties, but four deep west of Omaha being the limit. All over this great empire, in sundry and divers places on all old school atlases, was printed the significant word "unexplored," while including it all in large letters forming a semi-circle embracing hundreds of miles in extent, was printed the legend, "Great American Desert." It was always understood that all the country one hundred miles west of Omaha was desert, hopeless and irreclaimable. Much of it was and still is desert personified, but map making at one time, not very far back, was a good deal of guess work.

We made preparation for desert traveling, as we understood it to be, and so did others; besides we had the judge's early experience as a guide; but many started out in great glee, with

light rigs, high stepping horses, poorly provisioned, and with a general air of a holiday excursion. Some of the latter improvident class will be mentioned at times later on; they deliberately invited hardships, untold privations and disaster, and all these overtook them with all the force the words imply.

The great emigration of 1852 is believed to have been the heaviest ever known up to this year, going by both routes, the south or Santa Fe trail, through what is now Colorado and New Mexico, starting from St. Louis or St. Joe and via the Platte Valley, or the Oregon trail, from these two initial points, and also from Omaha. It has been estimated at approximating fifty thousand, and was spasmodic. No one of this day can tell why it started and assumed such proportions. In 1857 there was another great rush, principally to Pike's Peak and return. The indications now are, estimating from the ferry transportation and the merchants' reports, that the emigration this year, 1862, will surpass all previous movements. This is taking no account of the Mormon exodus of 1847, and omitting all estimate of the Mormon emigration through Florence.

As a convincing evidence of the gigantic strides the country has made since the time the little ferry boat carried our train over the river on the tenth day of June, 1862, referred to in the opening paragraph of this chapter, one might profitably study any standard map of the United States on which are outlined the various trans-Mississippi railroad routes. On that day

there was not a mile of railroad iron west of the Missouri River, nor was there any properly organized effort being made to place any; that was but a dream of the future. To this an exception must be made in favor of the little struggling road between Sacramento and Placerville (formerly Hangtown), California, which subsequently became the Central Pacific.

The discovery of rich gold mines in the interior of the continent north of the 40th parallel and between the Rocky Mountains on the east and the Coast and Cascade ranges on the west, had started an immense emigration of gold hunters from "The States," in 1862, numbering well up in the thousands, some authorities placing it as high as sixty thousand. A great number of people also from Utah, California and Oregon flocked into the new mining region. These emigrants penetrated everywhere and became a formidable mass, opening up to settlement every valley and habitable place. It was these people who brought about the segregation of hitherto unknown regions and the organization of Idaho and Montana into territories at the sessions of Congress of 1862-3 and 1863-4.

It was a curious fact that very few, comparatively speaking, who thus early penetrated into this mining region in the summer season, deemed it safe to remain over the winter, it being understood that the winters were so severe as to render it unsafe for any one to attempt to brave them. So thousands would go into the mines at the opening of spring and get out of the country late in the fall in both the years mentioned, so little

was known of the country. This belief changed after a season or two; men found that while the country was cold and dreary in winter it was not necessarily uninhabitable, as the wonderful development of Idaho and Montana gives sufficient evidence.

The country beyond us was given up to utter desolation and solitude save for the previous emigrants who only sought to pass through, not subdue it, and the hardy, adventurous trapper or trader with the Indian in gew-gaws, when in quest of furs—a land of mystery and incomprehensible value, inhabited by wild, wandering warlike Indians.

A few years and the scene changes. Railroads penetrate everywhere, and look on the map like an exaggerated spider's web; the locomotive rushes over well-built roads; passengers are whirled along in palatial sleeping coaches; no mountain range is high enough or broken enough to deter the modern railroad builder; no obstacle stands in the way of modern engineering skill; the country is subjugated to the wants of man, cultivated and made to produce all things conducive to sustaining a great population and the accumulation of wealth, and to blossom like the rose; cities and towns are dotting the whole once boundless desert, while the Indian has gone to "his father's," or to the "happy hunting grounds," and human life is as safe as anywhere else in the universe; millions of people are delving now where, when these notes were written, there were but hundreds, all peaceful, pushing and prosperous. The wand of the magician was wafted over

the land, and beheld the transformation, as tho the alchemist had worked some charm, securing an inheritance to the generations to come which cannot by any combination of figures be reduced to a hard commercial value. This is written out from an Omaha gateway standpoint, almost forty years after the notes of an overland journey were committed to paper at this same point. The magnificent result far surpasses the wildest vagaries of a lotus eater's dreamy imagination.

In obedience to some unwritten law or an unknown, irresistible influence, population and civilization have followed the sun to the westward, since a time "when the memory of man runneth not to the contrary." The strong and mighty leadership in the world, in science, in commerce, in war, in all things has moved westward at a steady pace, until with the railways and the telegraph all countries and all peoples are neighbors now, and the pushing elements of earth have no more worlds to conquer.

That Bishop Berkeley's words may surely be accepted as prophetic can hardly be disputed:

"Westward the course of empire takes its way,
The first four acts already past,
The fifth shall close the drama with the day;
Time's noblest offspring is the last."

CHAPTER VII.

"Camp Delay" and "Council of War"—Ready for the Start—"No Mail"—Starting Without a Leader—Great Trains Made Up—Reports of Indian Fights—The Government Military Escort—Miles of Emigrant Wagons—Struggling Settlements—A Break Down—Taking the Lead—The Platte River—Buying Fire Wood—Pike and Posey—Overland Telegraph and Stage Lines—Mosquitoes—Ferrying Over the Loup Fork—Picketing Animals—Horse Hair Lariat a Safe-guard—Mormon Freight Caravan and Emigrants—A Vile and Blasphemous Crew—Same Old Ferryman.

JUNE 16, "Camp Delay."—A "council of war" was held on this evening for consultation and to conclude on a course of future movements. No word had been received from the judge, and what were the plans for himself and the train of which he was the principal could not be divined. We concluded that we could not remain in "Camp Delay" much longer, as valuable time was passing rapidly, with a journey before us nearly one thousand miles longer than contemplated by any of the emigrants encamped around us or on the way. Our destination was Puget Sound, Washington Territory, while the companies generally would disperse among the various gold-mining localities this side of the Coast Range of moun-

ains; some would go to California, some to Eastern Oregon. A few announced their intention of changing their first plans and going to Colorado to locate and remain.

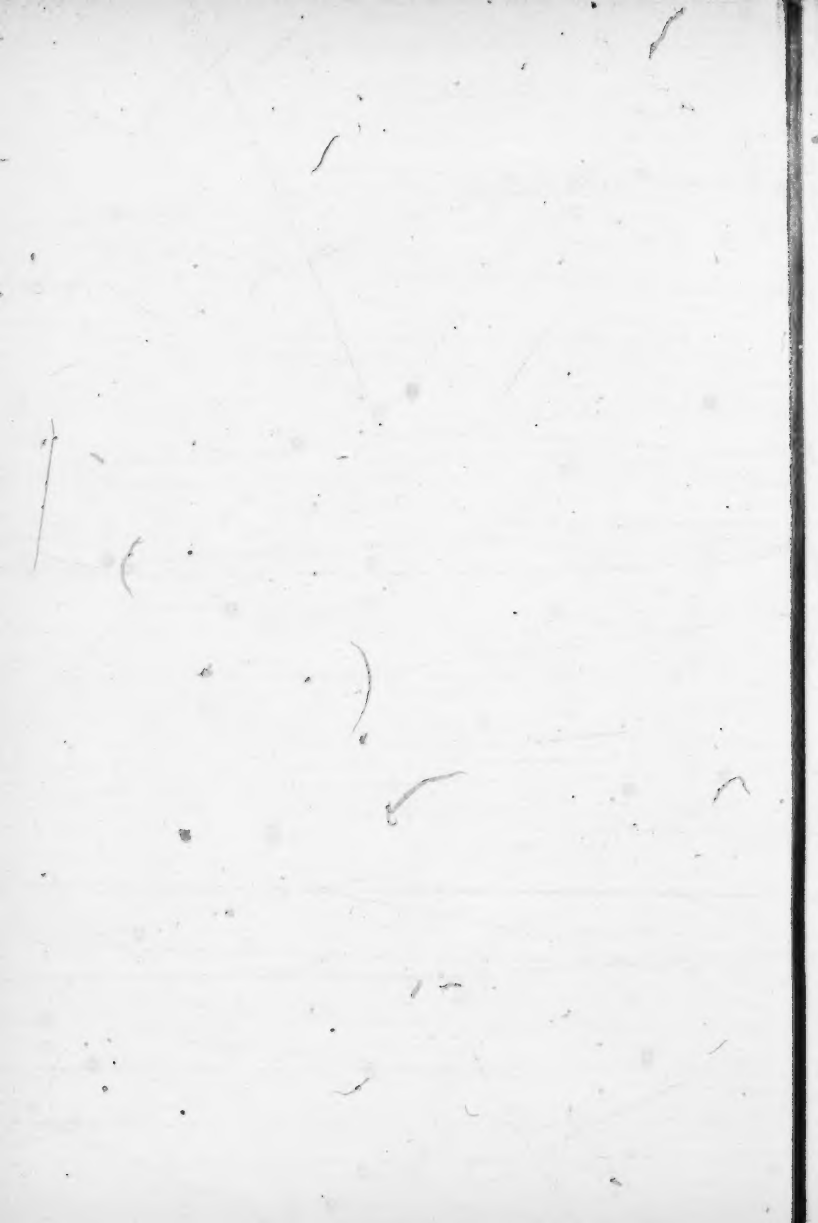
Do the best we might the season would be far advanced before we could get through, and no one of our party knew what a late season among the mountains had in store for the belated travelers. The reputation given the country by returning hunters and trappers was that the winters are something terrible to endure.

This was a "war" council, into which the ladies of the party were invited. It was concluded without a dissenting voice to move on at once, trusting to kind fate, which would enable the absent ones to overtake us; besides, word had passed around that the military escort had gone forward, but would remain one day at first camp, awaiting the general movement of the great assemblage. So in the morning we struck our tent, packed our belongings and arranged to "fall in." The invalids had all recovered nicely and took active interest in all matters pertaining to the journey.

Camp 9, June 17.—Left Omaha this morning and bid adieu to civilization, with anything but enlivening feelings. As a forlorn hope, I made another trip to the post office, only to be told, as on six previous occasions, "no mail." It was with some anxiety we took the trail, without a counselor, or guide, inexperienced and with a wearisome journey before us, with possible defense to make of lives and property. But in this matter we were no better nor worse off than all the



PLATT VALLEY COMPOUND LOCOMOTIVE IN 1862.



thousands who were headed westward, so we braced up and resolved to put our best efforts to the task allotted us, and sell precious lives, and the train, if need be, at a high rate.

Our course to-day lay through a prairie country, somewhat broken by hills, but destitute of timber. The roads were generally good and weather favorable for traveling, and as our animals were in good condition we made the most of it. The first part of the drive was over a stiff up grade; over the divide we crossed Mud Creek, muddy creek it ought to be, by all rules of nomenclature—conditions considered—then down grade to a good driving level.

Papillion—the butterfly—was passed fourteen miles out, a little straggling settlement, struggling to survive some depressing influence; the country did not offer many inviting conditions. We passed a number of emigrant wagons, all being propelled by patient oxen.

Crossed Elkhorn River by bridge and camped for the night near Bridgeport, a little settlement with several stores and some activity. Several Pawnee Indians who reached this point within a day or two reported fighting out on the trail between some of their tribe and their hereditary enemies, the Sioux; this was not reassuring, but there were no nervous people in our party. We crossed a long prairie and found numerous sloughs badly poached up.

Overtook the government escort here, but camped a good distance from it. We had an opportunity to "size it up," so to speak. It consisted of a company of about one hundred and

fifty officers and men, all well mounted, with an immense wagon train loaded with supplies, and in addition a band of perhaps four hundred head of stock, including cattle for subsistence on the way; a mountain howitzer was part of the war-like equipment. The stores included a large amount of extra rations intended for improvident emigrants or those who might become destitute on the road from any cause; improvident ones will be found in liberal numbers in all such emigrant movements to an exact certainty. The command was under Captain Crawford, who was ultimately to bring up at Fort Walla Walla, Washington Territory.

Captain Crawford we found to be a very affable gentleman and well qualified for the command placed under him. His education was purely military, and his instincts in accord with his education. How far sentimental sympathy might lead to assist distressed pilgrims was a matter for the future to determine.

The Elkhorn River has a rapid current, water a dark color and muddy. Rocky bluffs aligned the river a part of its length. We looked for fish, but such things were unknown there. We found wood and prime grass in abundance; traveled twenty-three miles for the day.

Camp 10, June 18.—When we started out this morning there was but little room on the trail for more wagons, for the different detachments were strung out for miles in as close order as they could well travel, and when accident happened to some animal in harness or under yoke, the whole

caravan had to stop unless a suitable place was adjacent by which those in the rear could turn out and pass on along the narrow trail. It is a safe assertion that from an elevated point of view, which I ascended for better observation, not less than one thousand covered wagons were in sight and ten thousand animals, and still other wagons and animals were in advance beyond a low hill, while slower ones were bringing up the rear, hidden by the same kind of obstruction. A great cloud of dust, dense and stifling arose and floated with a light wind.

Where the forage was to come from to sustain this vast herd of animals by and by was a problem which thus early suggested itself, for they cleared the ground of everything suitable for animals to eat within two miles of a camp. The movement commenced at daydawn; that meant camps must be ~~set~~ ^{stir} before 4 o'clock if the emigrants hoped to hold their places in the lines for any length of time.

At first we were in the rear of the escort, but an accident, breaking the tongue of one of its heavy wagons, enabled us to take the lead and so reverse the enjoyment of the dust cloud. Government teams are guided by the driver riding the near wheeler and managing the mules by a single or "jerk line" attached to the bit in the mouth of the near leader. In the case of this accident, the wagon master declared that the driver was asleep; that his team had wandered out of the road and the wagon encountered a telegraph pole; he gave us the benefit of a volley of choice and emphatic army oaths mixed with an array of strange plains

epithets of like character and then sent the offending driver to the rear for something. Our train kept the lead until night.

Camped at the first point where the trail touched the Platte River, fifty-two miles from Omaha. The river is a wide, shallow, swift stream, carrying a deal of mud from washings far up the valley. The trail lay over a low, bleak prairie, and all day a cold north wind made things very uncomfortable. Not a tree in sight all day except the scattering cottonwoods along the river bank.

Numerous little creeks, running toward the river, had to be crossed. The banks were badly cut by the great number of wagons, making the crossings very wide and very muddy, consequently difficult.

Good water and grass in abundance, but wood was obtained from the "River View" house at ten cents per cord wood stick, the sticks not being excessively large either; this would be at the rate of about twenty dollars a cord, and spongy cottonwood at that.

The little four corners settlement of Fremont, forty-six miles from Omaha, was not very old or very large, but had around it an immense area of level and apparently good country to grow old and big in. Fresh meat and potatoes were obtained at a trading post and added not a little to our enjoyment of the evening meal. Numerous emigrants came up to the junction of the main trail at this point, having taken the road where the Platte joins the Missouri; we called them the Pike and Posey contingent, as they hailed

from those localities. While these parties were in our neighborhood they maintained the reputation of Pike and Posey quite well.

Camp 11, June 19.—The trail to-day was much the same as yesterday over the broad, expansive, one might almost say, boundless prairie; trying to take in the boundaries and realize the extent of the comparatively level expanse around was tiresome to the eyes. Roads were better on the average, but there was no improvement in the quality or quantity of the dust.

Laying aside for the moment—while these notes were being made on a cracker box cover by the feeble light of a sputtering candle—all thought of where we were and of our environment, one would almost imagine we were in a land well advanced in the arts and comforts of civilization. Our line of march was over that taken by the Mormons in their great move in 1847, and was along the route of the great Pacific Telegraph and the coaches of the Western Stage Company on its north line to Colorado, Utah, California and Oregon, carrying United States mails and United States Express Company's matter.

With farm houses here and there along the highway and ranches established wherever encouragement was offered to cultivate the soil with more or less success, and bands of fat cattle abounding, our surroundings were by no means as uncivilized as they might have been. But this sort of reflection was rudely shattered when the "outer guard" informed me that it was time to

stand my trick; so with rifle and powder flask I stepped out into the open and paced my weary beat the remainder of the night.

We camped early and were still ahead of that escort; we lessened the distance to the Rocky Mountains by twenty miles. Here we found wood, water, grass and—mosquitoes. Whew! Because these ravenous pests have not been mentioned in these chronicles of a few days past, it must not be supposed that they avoided visiting our camp. The dust was with us also, deep and stifling; the alkali mixture very irritating to eyes and lungs.

Camp 12, June 20.—Again our regular one-night stand engagement found us on the banks of the muddy Platte. The camp ground was good, and we had no trouble in finding plenty of wood for cooking and a pleasant evening camp fire, around which the company gathered in true outing style. It should be added, too, that the smoke from the fire had its advantages, as mosquitoes and smoke have no affiliation. Several fellow pilgrims from neighboring camps came around to enjoy our cozy attractions, not the least of which were the ladies of the party, for woman-kind were not numerous in the trains around us.

River water had to serve us for cooking that night, and it was thick with mud; it looked as though the river was intent on wearing away half a continent; it surely will if given time enough. A handful of meal and a few moments' time sufficed to precipitate the silt and render the

water very palatable, for it is about all melted snow.

The road during the forenoon was poor and troublesome, rough in places and quite sandy elsewhere. Our drivers took no unnecessary risks, but selected their way carefully.

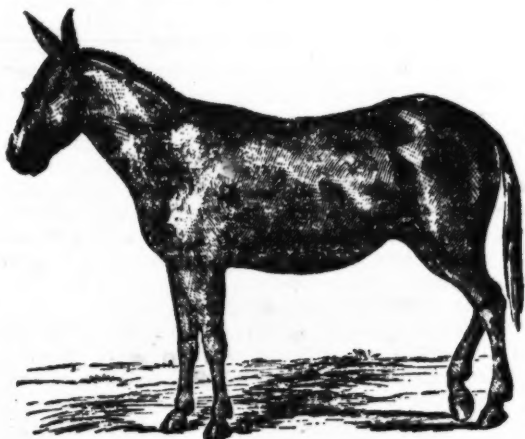
The Loup Fork River is a deep and impassable stream for fording. We crossed on a ferry, paying three dollars and a half; that ferry was a delusion and a snare; it was a crazy concern, and made our party feel uneasy, while the thing was trying, in its uncertain way, to get us over, but when the west bank was reached we pronounced it good enough, glad we had to cross it but once. The boat only crossed about half way when we were shoved off in the shallow mud and water and made our way to terra firma. It seemed like paying for the fording and getting the boat ride as a bonus.

After crossing the river the roads were good. The little town of Columbus on the north branch of the Loup Fork, ninety-two miles from Omaha, had some attractive features, and here most anything in the way of necessities could be obtained, if one had the price. Our requirements were limited and a few pounds of fresh meat satisfied them. A large blacksmith shop appeared to be doing a very satisfactory business; a rich, boundless agricultural country was back of Columbus, and the future possibilities in that line seemed, I judged, to be incalculable.

It was a pleasure indeed at this point in the journey, to note the fact that all the invalids had

recovered and were in as good health and spirits as tho nothing disagreeable had happened.

Our animals were "picketed" out—or staked—when a plat of ground was reached on which forage enough grows to justify camping. This picketing was done by means of a rope, called a



A FAITHFUL FRIEND.

lariat—a sailor would say a "painter"—about fifty feet or more in length, one looped to go around the neck of an animal, the other end being made fast to a stout stick, pointed to be driven into the ground. This gives an animal a circle to feed in of about one hundred feet diameter. When

danger was apprehended the animals would be brought up to camp and the lariat made fast to a wagon wheel. When a long line was required a number of lariats would be knotted together.

Plainsmen and Indians had lariats made of horse hair braided into a long line, useful for picketing their horses when they wished to sleep or to lasso other animals. This hair rope was also said to be a safeguard against rattlesnakes becoming too intimate at night, if coiled around on the ground where one wishes to sleep.

To-day a large Mormon train came up with us, it being the junction of the road from the Mormon starting point, Florence, before spoken of, and the main trail; we fervently wished: "May all the good saints on the calendar or the good fates, deliver us and all other Gentile emigrants from a like invasion ever more." A more sinister, brawling, profane gang who would cut a throat or scuttle a ship, it would be difficult to collect together from the slums and cesspools of the universe. Where the particular breed of biped which controlled that cavalcade were spawned no man knoweth. It would be a gross libel on the race to call such creatures human beings, with instincts no higher than the hyena, or credit them with having feelings in common with anything that stood on two feet, clothed and in the semblance of man. Foulter, viler and more blasphemous talk never in more continuous volume flowed from the lips of beings possessed of palates than came from those creatures, regardless of even the decencies of life.

They seemed to enjoy the bestial performance

and exhibited demoniac glee in overwhelming the civilized people they came in unwelcome contact with by the vulgar and obscene epithets which rolled off their tongues like water over a cataract. The very air seemed polluted and redolent with a nastiness exhaled from some unearthly gehenna. Words are feeble to describe fitly that hour or more while this foul-mouthed crew of Salt Lake Saints were passing. All the baser and sensual passions of men were talked over and bandied about until they tired of the unspeakably shameful show made before men, women and children.

It was a wonder their tongues did not blister or cleave to the roofs of their mouths. One gentleman in his heated wrath exclaimed: "You may rake hell and skim the ocean and you'll not find the equal of that vile crew." Emphatic, but truthful.

The approach of this caravan was observed for some time coming down on us from the road to the northward, indicated by a vast cloud of dust which hung over it like smoke from a prairie fire. Two or three out-riders, belonging to emigrant trains, hurried along the entire emigrant line, giving warning of the approach, and as they knew the characteristics of the outlawed species, cautioned everybody from saying or doing anything in resentment of what was certain to come. By common consent the whole of the emigrant trains, perhaps covering five miles in length, halted to let this Mormon caravan pass on; and on the outfit came, the drivers yelling, hooting, swearing, cracking their whips and cruelly lashing their oxen, forcing them along over the road at an un-

natural speed, many of them lame and yoke-galled and bleeding from cuts made by the lash or goad. They pushed on ahead rapidly and only a fetid atmosphere gave evidence that an unclean, villainous mass had passed.

The caravan consisted of thirty-five large freight wagons, each capable of carrying about two or three tons and with a trailer carrying half as much.

Each wagon was drawn by from six to eight yoke of oxen with one driver and a wagoner with each vehicle, making a crew of ninety well-armed cutthroats of a dangerous character to deal with. The wagons were loaded with all they could carry of goods and all manner of merchandise bound for Salt Lake City, the Mormon Zion.

In addition there came along behind at a more moderate speed and with less vulgar talk several wagons provided to take a large number of Mormon recruits to Utah. Among them was a surprising number of women, strangely attired, half-grown girls and children, as curious appearing and motley an assemblage as could be imagined, recruited from foreign lands, not one talking the American language, hardly one of them looking as though she had intelligence enough to last her over night away from her guardian.

A beautiful moonlight night, clear and entrancing made things appear at their best. A gentle breeze revived drooping spirits and kept most of the mosquitoes in retirement, but now and then one showed up to make sure that we had not entirely escaped them.

We were informed that the Loup Fork ferry

was originally established by the Mormons, at a very early day, to transport their own people—the Latter Day Saints—over the river, as it was not fordable; if so the ferryman still adhered to his faith, if appearances went for anything, for he had all the symptoms in relief. His big, coarse, shaggy beard was one of them, tho from a back view his long hair suggested the possibility of a poet, a plain's scout or a musician.

The people of Columbus told all who had interest enough to enquire that their incipient city was fourteen hundred and thirty-two feet above the sea level and overlooked Omaha by four hundred and sixty-six feet, eighty-five miles distant.

Advanced twenty-four miles to-day.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Platte Valley—Rich Soil—The Platte River Rising—Pony Express Station—Rain Needed—Limit of Civilization—An Iowa Train—A Heavily Loaded Outfit—All Manner of Farm Tools—Cows for Draft Animals—Chickens and Sheep—Irrepressible Youngsters—Fun and Frolic—Our Donkey Causes Amusement—The "Great American Desert"—A Thunder Storm—Grand Island Divides the Platte—Another Rattling Thunder Storm—Strange Sensations Experienced in the Storm.

CAMP 13, June 21.—We had now penetrated nearly forty-six miles into the great Platte River Valley, after leaving Fremont, for that was the general name by which the country is designated; local names applied to subdivisions were indicated by lateral streams coming in from the north or by the name of some little settlement on the bank of these affluents to the parent stream. It is certainly a great expanse of country.

The Platte was rising rapidly and overleaping its banks in places, and in so doing softening the road, enough to be troublesome and impede progress. Where a little run came down to the river the road was badly cut up, but our mules were good and faithful animals, and they dragged our wagons through safely. We preferred the muddy passage to risking an enfeebled bridge.

The stage or pony express stations we passed were not very elaborate establishments, but were made of logs when they could be had; of poles, sticks, mud and sod otherwise, intended only for the station keeper and a man to attend to stock, and not for the entertainment of guests. When the stages whirled past us they generally were light; few passengers seemed desirous to try that



STAGE STATION.

mode of travel, under the disturbed condition of things along the route. The design was to have the stations fifteen miles apart, but it was necessary to locate them where grazing was assured and abundance of hay for the stock without hauling it any great distance. Wood and good water were also to be considered.

Camped near the river to-night, a passable

stopping place; good water from a creek, grass meagre and a skirmish necessary for firewood.

The government escort had gone on ahead, and the unfeeling Mormon drivers had forced their poor oxen on somewhere beyond us, for which relief everybody on the road was grateful, tho sorry for the persecuted oxen who could utter no complaint.

Camp 14, Sunday, June 22.—Being unable to find a suitable camping place at which to stop over to-day, it became necessary to continue our march. Roads were good; no obstructions or delays and our mules conveyed us twenty-three miles without apparent labor. This may be measured as a "Sabbath day's journey."

Halted at an excellent camp ground in company with a great number of our fellow travelers. The covered wagons afforded the only shade to be had at the noon rest.

A high wind from the north commenced blowing about dark, and thick clouds threatened a severe storm; everything was doubly secured in anticipation of it. A furious wind continued about three hours, but no rain followed.

The isolated locations under cultivation which we passed to-day sadly needed moisture. The crops were stunted and drying up; a good soaking rain would save them if it came soon; if not a drought would bring ruin in its wake. Irrigation was not in any case attempted.

Corn for the mules was readily obtained at wayside stations and ranches at reasonable rates, cheaper in reality than fire wood when that com-

modity had to be purchased. No other camp supplies other than staples we carried along were now obtainable, as everything had to be freighted into the valley at high rates and sold to emigrants at still higher prices.

The title of the chapter would warrant some explanation of the make-up of trains for the overland journey. Take an Iowa family as an instance. It would consist of a man and wife and a troop of active, irrepressible children of all ages up to twenty, about evenly divided between boys and girls, and all of them pictures of rugged health. It would be a typical selection. Uniformly the head of the house would take all his portable belongings, plows, hoes and forks, etc., from the farm and everything from the household. These would be loaded into a wagon of generous build as to running gear and with an enormous body, five or six feet deep; oftener two of these vehicles than one.

On a projecting shelf or tail board would be lashed a large cast-iron cooking stove or range, with it being three or four pieces of stove pipe and an elbow; on one side of the wagon box would be secured a water barrel and other needed things; on the other side a large churn and boxes of provisions, on outside shelves; under the wagon bed a coop of chickens. The next wagon, maybe a trailer, would also be loaded with all that could be stowed. Usually each of the young members of the family would have his or her separate individual dog, which would howl lustily half the night and consume as much provisions as its owner. The head of the house seemingly had

an idea of going out into this new country, selecting a favorable location, taking up what land he thought he needed and making a new home. Perhaps he had been crowded by too many families getting into the same county, back in Iowa.

Part of his load would be seed grain of all kinds. They would have feather beds and pillows and every luxury of the old abandoned home and a tent to sleep in, or it may be they slept in the wagons. When such an outfit camped it looked as tho there was a camp meeting or a steamboat



COW IN A TRAIN.

landing, from the amount of plunder strewn over the ground. To navigate this caravan there would be six or eight yoke of cattle, a part of them being cows in full milk. The cows would serve under the yoke, in the lead on alternate days, and be milked twice a day, and when not thus yoked as draft animals, would be driven in a herd belonging to the concern, together with a dozen sheep. The milk not immediately required by the family would be put in the churn, and the motion of the wagon on the road to the next stop-

ping place would churn the butter completely, working it into a compact roll.

It would be the special affair of the youngsters at each camping place to let the fowls out and see that they had a run, feed and water and then coop them up again for the night. This is the way they started out, going, in anticipation, a few hundred miles to "Californy" or Oregon—with a strong accent to the last syllable—and be as happy as the day was long.

When a number of such families joined together it would be a formidable thing, bigger than Van Amburg's three-ring circus. There would always be fiddlers galore among them, and supper over, a place would be slicked down and a dance would be the order, with singing, shouting and frolic until a late hour. If the dancing ground happened to be on the opposite side of a shallow stream it would be no trouble for girls and boys to wade it; dance they must.

No sooner would supper be over and the camp arranged for the night than the tones of the violin would be heard sending out the familiar strains of Money Musk, Virginia Reel, a polka, or square quadrille, or other lively dance music dear to the young country heart. "On with the dance; let joy be unconfined," was the sentiment always uppermost in the minds of the young among those companies. During the noon half a dozen greasy, well-thumbed packs of cards would be produced, and all hands would indulge in euchre, old sledge, or seven up for an hour; it was something for amusement constantly.

In good season the next morning they would

be on the road again; the patient old gees and haws trying to make time while dragging their enormous loads; all things to be repeated at next stopping place.

Our donkey was a never-ending source of amusement; he was an intelligent beast, as donkeys go, and so far as outward demonstration could indicate anything, he rather enjoyed his occasional little mule joke. Any one who liked might ride him and he would trudge along un-



OUR DONKEY.

complainingly under any burden and frequent imposition; he was always saddled when on the march. There were two things he had acquired a violent prejudice against which no amount of coaxing could induce him to overcome; one was a positive and mulish refusal to go ahead of any other animal in the train or on the trail; spur and whip would not disturb his determination in this regard. The other rule of his life was never to cross a wet or muddy place or a stream of water

until he had hunted the ground over for a dry crossing and exhausted every resource occurring to his mule mind to find; much less would he carry a rider over such a place. When he did finally venture a crossing it was a comical thing to see him survey himself when muddy and wet, in evident disgust at the situation.

It was customary when breaking camp in the morning, or leaving the ground after a noon halt, for some one to remain behind to look the place over to see that nothing was accidentally left from the packing up. To-day, at noon, Mr. Taylor did this part of camp duty, and as there was a marshy place a short distance ahead he retained donkey to ride over the swamp and to overtake the company. The first thing to attract attention was a combination roar from the rear, coming from man and beast. Taylor had ridden down to the edge of the marsh over which donkey did not propose to convey him and so set about jettisoning his cargo; he commenced to rear and pitch, and was going up and down like a hobby horse, with his heels high up in the atmosphere at every jump, and braying in strident tones. At this Taylor set up a yell at the top of his voice, saying: "Hey, there, hold on! I won't ride this damn brute," and more of the same kind, and he didn't ride him. Everybody roared at the circus, which so provoked Taylor that he was glum the rest of the day. The result was that the rider went overboard, and both man and beast walked across the marsh and each one separately overtook the train.

Conversation around these neighboring camps ran at a lively rate, and a continued jargon of voices mingled in one uninterrupted stream of words. There was always enough interest to keep up an unflagging current of noisy talk. We heard more western phrases during those neighborly associations than ever before got to our ears. Such expressions as "packing water," "right smart," "right peart," "freuit," for all kinds of table sauce; "right smart of wood," "right smart chance," "quite a few," "carry the horses (or oxen) to water," "buckut," for water pail, and numerous other colloquialisms to an endless degree.

We shall encounter some of these trains later on when the stern realities and exhausting toil of the journey begins to tell.

Drove twenty-one miles.

Camp 15, June 23.—The evidence was abundant on every hand, now that we were well into the "Great American Desert" of the geographies or atlases of our school days. The soil began to show sand deposits; cactus, sagebush and greasewood appeared, settlers or traders were more widely separated and an air of desolation prevailed. We were beyond the defined lines of official survey and all legalized county organization was behind us. There were but thirty-four organized counties in the territory of Nebraska, and they entirely in the eastern portion. To the westward civil authority practically ceased; everything was in an unsettled condition, and where

emigrant parties had joined for security and combined for their own protection, each company was a law unto itself. In a region without law there are apt to be lawless and troublesome characters.

There was some improvement in the condition of the country traversed to-day; as we left the river bottom and ascended the higher lands things looked better. The struggling crops needed rain badly. The growing forage, called buffalo grass, was withered, and to all appearances too dry for feed, but the animals ate it greedily, so it was evidently nutritious.

The storm indications of last night materialized before morning, but the heavier part drifted away past us towards the north. Our camp got full benefit of the thunder and lightning, and the rattling electric illumination was a brilliant affair. The progress of the pouring rain could be distinctly heard and traced as it sped away with the wind eastward with a crackling sound not unlike the breaking of the surf on a sandy beach. We got some of its force, but no discomforts from it, as the refreshing effects overcame any ill consequences.

During the forenoon the sun shone intensely hot, but in the afternoon clouds obscured old Sol, and a cool, quiet north wind tempered things pleasantly. We forded Wood River, a narrow, shallow stream, though the approaches on either side were cut down a long way back, and were deep with slick mud.

Camp to-night was located on a broad, level

plain, in a good place remote from the river, whereat we are infinitely pleased, as the elevation, the distance back and the cool evening breeze effectually suppressed the myriads of mosquitoes which had so painfully annoyed us so long. The regular evening smudge was dispensed with; that made breathing possible without inhaling the pungent, irritating smoke from the greasewood and sage.

Grand Island, formed by the Platte River having worn away two channels of about equal size, is a very large body of land, which station keepers told us was about forty miles in length and three miles across at the widest part. It is entirely above the highest flood, is of a rich alluvial soil, or mold, covered with a heavy growth of cottonwood, all the timber the country produces. A stage and telegraph station bearing the formidable name of Grand Island City, with a frontier trading post, was all we found; in fact, we were not looking for them, and jogged right along to our present camp. This station was one hundred and fifty-three miles from Omaha; our camp was sixteen miles further on.

A polite invitation to get my gun and assume guard duty for the next four hours had a tendency to lessen my ambition to write camp history. But guard duty could not be relaxed with safety—history must take its chances.

Before a camping location was found, late in the afternoon, storm clouds began to gather away down over the plains south of the river, and by the way the elements showed agitation it was

made very apparent that a severe storm was approaching directly in our path and was likely to give us trouble. A hurried effort enabled us to get in camp and prepare for it. The indications were that a severe blow was imminent, so our tent was doubly fastened by passing a strong line twice over the ridge pole and securely lashing it to strong stakes. The storm came along with fierce power, and the intensely heated atmosphere of a week past apparently concentrated in the electric display; it was simply a grand demonstration; I rather like a thunder storm when the atmospheric conditions are keyed up to a tension which displays the irresistible power which no man may estimate, and the artillery of heaven is given the freedom of the blue vaulted space above.

This storm came fully up to anticipation. The lightning was intense, vivid to a degree indescribable; the rattling thunder was angry and continuous until it seemed as if chaos was called. Platte Valley thunder storms are noted for their terrible force, and this one while not lasting a great length of time was certainly fully up to old established reputation. Fortunately the wind veered and swept down the river, and we did not get the full effect of its mad pranks. Our tent fastenings strained and creaked, but for the extra lashings would certainly have given way. An hour of this experience was perfectly satisfying.

The intense flashes of lightning, affecting all the company, producing a dizziness and an unpleasant feeling, followed on the instant with crashes of thunder that shook the earth, gave evidence that some objects in our immediate vicinity

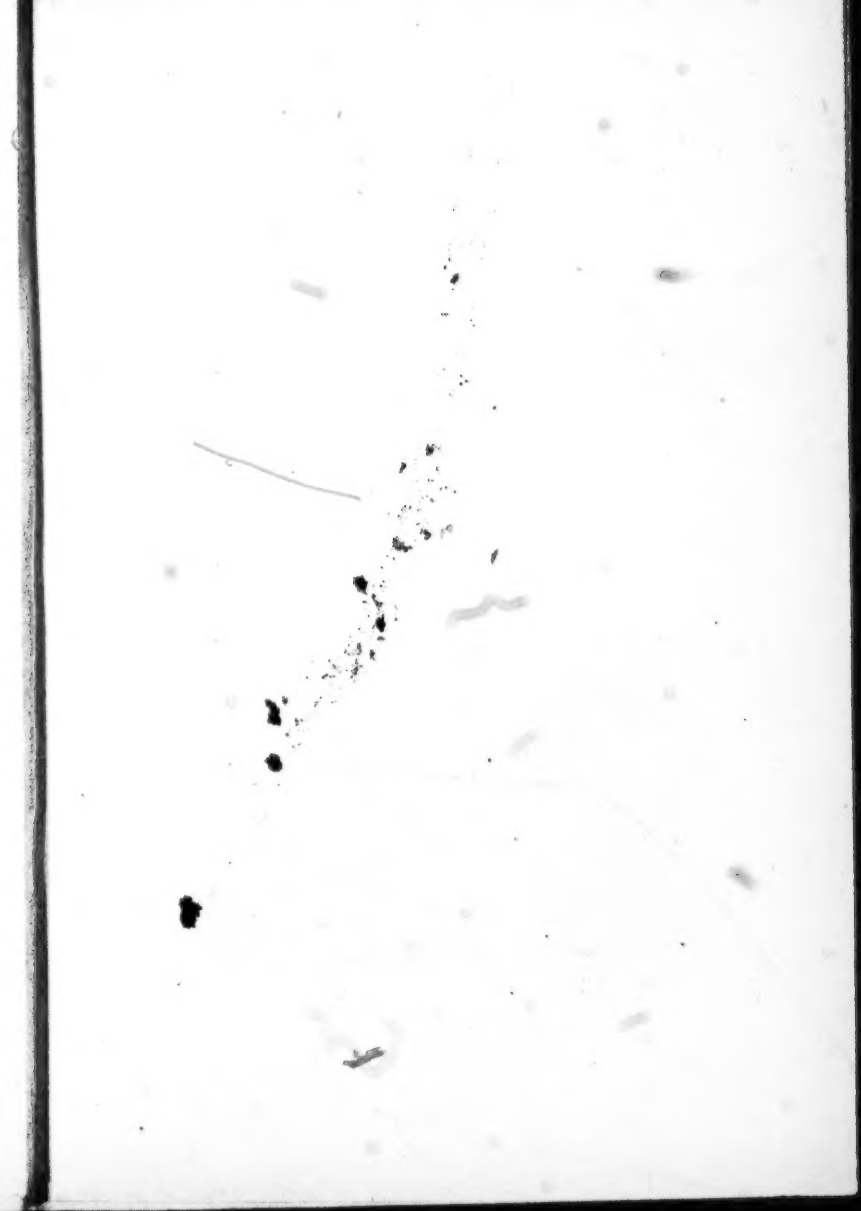
were struck and shattered. Nothing was disturbed in our camp, but many of the company experienced a feeling of severe nausea several times before the storm was over.

Covered twenty-five miles to-day.

CHAPTER IX.

Camp Opposite Fort Kearney—A Splendid View—Our Irrepressible Donkey—Three Simultaneous Thunder Storms in Sight—The Escort in the Dim Distance—Immense Indian Reservation—Fording the Platte Impossible—The Old Ford Dangerous—Crossing the River Under Difficulties—Paying Ferriage and Then Working Passage—No Letters—A View of the Fort—The Return Trip—Wading the Channel—A Close Call from Drowning—A Twenty-five Mile Trip—The River a Waste of Water—Camp Disappointment Number Two—Start for Fort Laramie—The Desert in Earnest—Rough Roads.

CAMP 16, June 24.—Camp was located on an elevated plateau on the slope of the bluff about one mile from the river. Fort Kearney was on the south bank of the river about three and a half-miles distant. From our elevation, as also from several similar points on the road to-day, a splendid view of the Great Platte Valley could be had; magnificent distances, brought under one's vision, with high mountains a long way off to the west, north and south, and uncounted miles of the Platte River, swollen to immense proportions. A clear, bracing atmosphere rendered observation illimitable. The river glimmered in the starlit evening like a vast sheet of silver. But don't let any one for a moment think we were enamored





THROWN FROM A MULE.

with the valley or the country generally, because things had an attractive glamour by moonlight on the occasion of which I write.

Several hundred pilgrims were camped about us, and their evening lights and camp fires made things seem as tho an army were encamped there.

To-day it was my turn to entertain the members of the company by performing with our irrepressible donkey—and they failed to get the benefit of the show. I had surveyed the ground over in the morning to gather up any article of equipage that might have been overlooked, retaining “donk” to ride to overtake the company. We jogged along a little way until a small shallow creek with marshy banks was reached when that donkey stopped short, planted his forefeet obliquely in front, lowered his head and raised his heels; as there was nothing overhead for me to cling to, I went head foremost over into the mud, with both arms extended; it all happened like a flash. My arms went into the sticky stuff up to the shoulders; besides that my head was half buried. The mud was sulphury and ill-smelling, making a very uncomfortable bath; but what could I do? That idiotic donkey walked over the oozy ground and waited on the opposite side for me as demurely as could be. No one saw the performance, so I was relieved from the inevitable laughter, and the company lost one installment of fun.

For amusements at this camp, there being usually a dearth as well as an indisposition to search for diversion, most of the party indulged in shooting at some small birds, about the size of wrens;

the birds were not injured. The ladies took an interest in the practice and became quite proficient in shooting revolvers, for none knew how soon they might be called upon to assist in the defence of their lives, though such a contingency we hoped was very remote.

Occasional patches of golden rod and sunflower relieved the forlorn appearance of the sparse and stunted vegetation and looked stately in this far away region; small blue and white flowers were frequently seen, growing on little stems close to the ground; but flora was not very lavish in her display.

A great prairie fire several miles distant on the south side of the river sent up dense clouds of black smoke all day and at night the southern sky was made lurid by the flames which shot upward in sheets miles in extent.

Across the river to the south also, but a long way off, and widely separated, were two distinct thunder storms at one time, as evening approached, while in the distance down the road we had just passed over was the third one. None of them was near enough to us to perceptibly affect the atmosphere or to get between us and the sun. The flashes of lightning were very distinct, but no thunder was heard.

The escort was camped a long distance in advance, just discernible on the road to the west. The captain in command made a longer stay here than is usual in order to communicate with his brother officers at the fort opposite. The immense herd of animals belonging to the company would roam at large and eat down a great extent

of growing forage at every station; at frequent times it was a serious skirmish for emigrants to secure enough feed for their hard-worked stock.

Roads were generally good, but an occasional slough full of black flood water made heavy pulling, the axles dragging through the mud like road scrapers. The day was fiercely hot, with no shade to relieve it, a pitiless sun burning to the quick at the noon resting halt.

At night half a hundred greasewood smudges served to keep the mosquitoes down in the river bottom. A number of emigrants intended leaving the north trail at this point, fording the river and continuing their journey on the trail south of that fork of the Platte.

Buffalo grass was abundant for forage; the value of this feed is that green or dry it is good for cattle, and it never gets in condition when they will not eat it. Fuel was not to be had except by purchasing cottonwood at the station again, paying one dime a stick, cord wood length. These sticks were not large, and a cord of it might be worth at that rate about twenty-five dollars; being cottonwood it would make the equivalent in good wood cost about fifty dollars.

To-day we traveled twenty-five miles; making one hundred and ninety-seven miles placed to our credit towards the completion of our journey. War department records give this place an elevation of twenty-one hundred and fifty feet higher than Omaha, making an up grade of about six feet to the mile from that city.

This was the second haven of our hopes, and as Fort Kearney was also a post office on the over-

land line, we arranged to tarry in camp one day for a messenger to cross the river to ascertain if letters were there awaiting us.

When the regular guard was set the camp was soon slumbering in quietness and security.

It might be well to remark at this point that about all the country one could see around here, and much more besides, among distant hills, was an Indian reservation, assigned to the Pawnee tribes. The Fort was named for Col. Kearney, who astonished the Pawnee Indians a few years before by so soundly thrashing them, that ever since they had a wholesome regard for "pale faces," and only fought their hereditary enemies, the Sioux, every good chance they had, and getting themselves whipped and scalped about every time for their presumption.

June 25.—Camp was astir at good season this morning, and as I was designated to go as envoy to Fort Kearney, I got a hurried breakfast and started out as tho it was to be the funniest kind of a frolic. I was eager for this side expedition, with high hopes of receiving letters both from home and from the judge. Myself and others of the party had written letters to friends left behind in the "states" to be mailed at this post.

I reached the ranch house on the river, which was also the telegraph and stage station, in good season, and arranged for transportation across to the fort. As the river was very high, fording at this point—the old emigrant ford—was very difficult, always dangerous at this season of the year, and this year especially. Several emigrant

wagons had a few days before been overturned and washed away; the cattle sinking in the quicksand were drowned; so fording for a time had ceased, the water increasing hourly; I was obliged to await the arrival of the mail stage, which did not get in until 12 noon. The crossing was four miles above. I was to pay three dollars (contributed by the company, as I was "strapped," as before related) to be ferried over and to go with the mail. Other parties desirous of crossing the river made arrangements at the same cost.

When the stage arrived, the mail, which consisted of three medium-sized leather pouches, was quickly transferred to a "mud wagon," for transportation over the river. This mud wagon, so called, was no more intended for muddy roads, in fact, not nearly so much, as it was constructed for fording rivers or sloughs. It was a specially constructed vehicle with high running gear, with tires on the wheels about five inches wide, the better to overcome the treacherous quicksand in the river bed. The floor of the wagon was six feet above the ground. To this conveyance were hitched four big, handsome iron-gray mules with "Old Pap Lamb," a well-known frontiersman and stage driver in the driver's seat. The four-mile drive was quickly covered. At this point the river ran in three channels, separated by islands, one being Grand Island, before mentioned, and one of less size; and was in all three miles wide. The first two channels were forded by the wagon, the wheels rumbling along the quicksand bottom as tho on a bed of rocks. Haste must be made, for "he who hesitates is lost," most

assuredly in such places; a short delay is enough to engulf horses, wagon, passengers and all in the turbid waters, and your doom is certain. This is the fate which overtook many an unfortunate pilgrim in this treacherous river.

When the main channel next the south bank of the river was reached, it was about one mile wide, and running very swift where deepest; the mail was thrown into a fine boat, held in waiting for it, and the passengers blandly informed that they could not ride in the boat with the mails. There we were, and there was no help for it; another boat, an old, rickety, leaky thing, with two broken paddles, was then secured. Constant bailing was necessary to keep it afloat, and we had occasionally to get out and drag the contrivance over sand bars.

A scorching, vertical sun made that water a steaming furnace. The wretched little craft shot the last part of the swiftly rushing current like a dart, but, of course, when we landed the mail had been thrown into a wagon in waiting, and hurried on down to the post without recognizing a passenger with an unlimited prepaid ticket.

We had the privilege of walking that four miles, as the road still remained, and the distance was covered in excellent time; but before the post office was reached the mails had been exchanged and were on the way back to the crossing. No letters, no news of any kind. Feelings which had been running high with anticipation met a rude shock; it was a bitter and discouraging disappointment.

I had tramped over twelve miles in this en-

deavor and received no compensating return; the only thing left to do was to return the way I came and make the most of the experience. We obtained from the sutler of the fort the only eatable thing he had, a few ancient crackers, and started for our crazy old boat. I say "we" advisedly; they were myself and the man from the stage station who had contracted to deliver me at the post and return me back to the north side, for a cash consideration.

The fort or post was constructed of wood chiefly, together with the buildings connected with it, and was of considerable extent. The chief occupation of the soldiers stationed there and the frontier adventurers who always hang around such places to fleece them, seemed to be drinking whiskey and gambling. A few mountain howitzers, rusty from disuse, stood within the enclosure, about as useful in time of war as an empty nail keg, mounted on wheels. Kearney City, two miles up the river, familiarly called "dobe town," because it was constructed of sun dried brick, was a small forlorn burg and of little consequence.

The boat had to be towed some distance above the landing so that we could make the opposite point right with the current. One would pull on the tow line, and the other keep it clear of the bank with the paddle. Four of us got in to cross the channel, and it was done on the double quick through a rapid current; it had to be thus, and two bailed constantly to keep the contrivance afloat, one man using his hat for a dipper.

New bars had formed since the first crossing, and part of one island was under water, as the

river had risen nearly a foot in the meantime; so all hands pulled off boots and socks and jumped out to push the craft over the bars, sometimes having to carry it. In jumping back into the boat I received a severe cut on the bottom of one foot from a protruding rusty nail, the scar of which I carry to this day, my foot being so thoroughly water soaked no serious harm came of it, the healing process going forward without interruption.

When we reached the place where the mail wagon ought to have been waiting for the return passengers, as per contract, it had gone; some remarks were made, but to little purpose. A tramp through mud and sloughs was the only thing before us. The party at this time numbered eleven. It was dark before we got to the last channel, and it was an angry flood, running like a mill race. It takes one skilled in uncertain river navigation to find the sand bars in such a case; and the one skilled man was my chaperon.

In the stream we went, the water getting deeper every step, the quicksand shooting from under one's feet like a soap mine. We were all abreast; I was at the lower end of the line, and being exhausted from a long day's tramp, my footing was insecure; I was being gradually forced into deeper water and a swifter current. When the water reached my chin, I asked the man next above me to take hold of my hand; he did so, and in making the movement almost lost his footing; the next man above him quickly took hold of his disengaged hand, the next above doing the same, until the whole line were holding to each other,

else two of us to a certainty would have gone down that muddy river and very likely this story would never have been written. A silver match safe, which my brother had given me, floated out of my vest watch pocket, shot up past my nose and went down with the flood. That match safe may have joined the blockading fleet at the mouth of the Mississippi River for ought I know.

We all finally got out of the whirling current and treacherous quicksand and to dry land. I was pretty nearly exhausted and could go no further, I thought; I sat down to think, but not to remain long; a cloud of Platte Valley mosquitoes, the largest, most numerous and ravenous in the world, had awaited my coming and met me with their whistles in tune. The other men, strong and hearty, hurried on down to the station, four miles away.

I was also prompted to start after cutting some willow branches for fans, reaching the station at 10 o'clock, "dead on my feet." The station keeper invited me to a late supper, and a hearty frontier meal had a wonderfully reviving effect, so that I felt partially recompensed for the labor I had undergone, and reconciled to the privilege of having been "ferried" over the turbulent Platte.

Reached camp just about daybreak, worn out, crippled and feeling almost wholly useless, but with a fund of experience that one might cross two continents and not otherwise obtain. I had been out twenty-four hours, had one meal in that time and traveled twenty-five miles in the manner described; had accomplished nothing and had

only to my side of the account the barren satisfaction of having made an exhaustive effort to hear from the principals of the expedition.

This was my experience of a day with the Platte River, a great waste of water, fishless, of no use to mankind further than to be a drain to the interior of the continent; the water would be much more useful if left there, if that were possible. It is a treacherous stream when in flood, and useless when without water in the dry season, water enough going to waste down that river alone to irrigate half a continent for an entire season.

Camp 17, June 26.—Broke camp in good season this morning; that is, we were on the road at 6 o'clock. A great procession had formed before that hour and many were still preparing for the march. The amount of dead weight some emigrants carried to unload and load at every camp, consuming time and an expenditure of energy, which even to our amateur minds and scant experience seemed astonishingly unnecessary. That energy properly directed would have been a valuable asset in the exacting and unavoidable labor to come after.

We congratulated ourselves after each day's journey that our load was compact and simplified, containing nothing not absolutely a necessity for the needs of the company, and not adding unnecessary weight to the load.

None of our party felt in a particularly jolly mood when we quitted Camp Disappointment number two, opposite Fort Kearney. With a

courage none felt like relaxing a jot, we faced the next division of our journey, with ever increasing danger, three hundred and twenty-five miles, to Fort Laramie. That was the next and last junction of roads—diverging east and west, and an overland stage station at the foot of the mountains; we felt assured that the judge and his family would meet us there at least; if he didn't—well, we would cross that bridge when we reached it.

The morning was clear and pleasant; but how excessively hot it was throughout the middle of the day! I was this time the occupant of the "hospital"—the other name for our ambulance—completely used up from the bootless exertion of yesterday. Between my stiffened muscles, a crippled foot, the stifling heat and myriads of gnats and flies, my time in that sweat box was pretty well taken up and my attentions well distributed: and how interminable the melancholy hours seemed on that disagreeable occasion! I had my revenge, however, as the rest of the party fretted over some of these plagues as well as I.

The last human habitation had now been left behind. We had purchased corn for the animals as long as it could be procured, and then took on as much as it was deemed advisable to carry for future use. The rations for each mule were reduced to a pint in the morning to be kept up until the supply was exhausted. The mules evidently understood this, for after asking for their evening allowance of corn two or three times, in mule language, and receiving no response, they settled

down to munching bunch or buffalo grass, which at times left something to be desired.

Roads not all good; rough and irregular. The plateau was frequently broken by deep ravines, with steep descents, and when at the bottom of most of them it was "dry as a bone." We were on the flood season trail; one lower down toward the river is only for the dry season. We were forcibly reminded of the fact of these dry washes by the fact that our wagon wheels were shrinking and water was needed to keep them up solid. At the noon halt water had to be carried quite a distance up a steep incline to pour on wheels, which showed evidence of weakening.

First buffalo skeletons were in sight to-day; this does not seem strange, however, as the buffalo range has been further west for some years past.

Several storm clouds appeared during the afternoon from as many directions, hurried on by some unseen atmospheric force. The thunder and lightning were distinctly heard and seen; when one of those dark, rolling storms got between us and the sun there was momentary relief. Anything, even a rattling thunder storm would be a genuine relief from the piercing rays of a pitiless sun. But they passed by on the other side, leaving only the intensity of the reflection of the sun through clouds charged with heavy vapor.

We heard the heavy wind and the rain very distinctly from our camp as these notes were being placed on paper, but the storm moved away from us toward the north, and pleasure was experienced because of it.



No mile posts to count now, so distances traveled were mere conjecture, but we estimated twenty-two miles for the drive of the day.

Camp was located in the bed, or rather on the side of a deep, dry creek or wash, the best place to be had. Water was found by sinking holes two or three feet deep and letting them slowly fill, and wood consisted of small willows so green that it took some patient coaxing to get fire enough to cook supper.

Camp fires were a luxury not to be indulged in, and there was hardly enough tufts of grass or waste to be found to smudge out the eternal mosquito and to relieve ourselves and the mules from their distressing sting.

CHAPTER X.

Exasperating Conditions—Mosquitoes and Science—Greasewood, Sage and Prickly Pear—Use for Umbrellas—A Strange Omission—Eighteen Mile Desert—A Drive in the Darkness—An Accident at Midnight—Repairing a Broken Wheel—A Piece of Concealed Lumber—Heavy Storm—The Two Platte Rivers Unite—Buffalo Skeletons—Old Buffalo Trails and Wallows—The Buffalo Gnat—A Serious Menace—Mormon Trains Eastward Bound—Another Vile Exhibition—"Black Snake" Whip—A Devilish Invention—An Elegant Outfit—Beautiful Mirage.

CAMP 16, June 27.—The most exasperating, uncomfortable hours for the season so far were last night, all on account of mosquitoes; they came in swarms, in clouds; there was no sleeping, hardly safety in breathing; every individual one of them was as voracious and persistent as Hungry Joe. It may be that science is correct and that only the female mosquito bites. We wondered, if that were true, where on earth these myriads could have left their male consorts; they must have crowded the earth somewhere. As nothing could be found to make a sufficient smudge to drive them away, the only thing left to do was to fight them off by other means. The poor animals suffered as much as we, to such an extent they could neither rest nor feed. Fumi-

gating with brown sugar and camphor by burning was but a partial relief. The pest was a perfect terror.

The military arm of this immense procession was a long way ahead. A glimpse now and then could be obtained of it pushing against the horizon as it appeared on the edge of these vast and limitless plains. The escort had good horses and mules, and carried a great quantity of grain and forage with it, and so was able to get far more service from its animals and cover more distance than the average pilgrim could hope for.

Our route lay through a country very like yesterday's trail. The crooks in the road and bends in the river seemed to come in conjunction at times, and then both would bear away again long distances. Sand was deep and wheeling heavy, as we ground along as tho rolling over broken stone.

Greasewood, sagebrush and prickly pear abounded, a kind of shrubbery not particularly attractive. Vegetation, I judged, avoids this region of nature's abominations, though occasionally a tiny pink or blue flower struggled to maintain a precarious existence, and encourage the weary traveler with thoughts that there was a little good left. This was a fitting home for rattlesnakes, and one had to be on the lookout for their deadly bite. It was a poor day's record if every man in the party had not at least the distinction of one of these vipers to his credit. Notches cut in some walking sticks showed a good list of dead snakes.

The proper name of wild sage is *artimisia*; it

is a member of the wormwood family and in growing stools out becoming very bushy, sometimes growing five and six feet high. It contains a resinous sap and emits a strong odor of turpentine and camphor. It burns quickly, but makes a hot fire. For making a strong smudge to drive gnats and mosquitoes it is unequaled. The generally accepted title is sagebrush, and under that name will be hereafter referred to. The wild sage is always the same in appearance.

The fording of two or three shallow creeks, owing to so many trains passing, caused some delay, as the mud was deep and the creek bank uniformly steep. It seemed to have been an unwritten law that every man not sick or driving should walk, to lighten the loads. As I was now out of the "hospital" and had no driving to do a walking assignment was accorded me. At times this would be a pleasant change to any one, but under a vertical sun along a road deep with hot sand and devoid of shade, there are often uncomfortable drawbacks. One or two of our party seemed to have been born tired, and occupied seats in the wagons with complacent regularity.

It seemed strange at that time, and none the less so now, when the trip notes are being more fully written out, that of all the thousands who went out on that laborious journey not one individual had thoughtfulness enough to take an umbrella; such a thing would have been a positive luxury and saved hours of dreary plodding and sweltering under an almost tropical sun.

It was long past noon before the midday halt could be made, owing to the scarcity of water

and grass; when these were found a good rest was taken. At no time was removing the harness from the mules omitted, and each one washed and rubbed briskly with a cloth or brush where the saddle and collar bore heavily. The old fellows understood this attention, and appreciated it greatly.

The daylight drive of the afternoon was cut short by the forenoon drive being prolonged. As night approached and no sign of either forage or water appeared, naught but forbidding barrenness, with sand and alkali dust deep and stifling, it began to look discouraging. We were, at 6 o'clock, in the midst of the "eighteen mile desert," something a little more repellant than what we had already passed over.

During the afternoon a sudden gale arose, with thick, threatening clouds, but unaccompanied by thunder and lightning. The wind howled a dismal chorus, and the constant shrieking prevented voices being heard a short distance away; it increased in severity as night wore on, and everything was as black as could well be imagined. After a slight fall of rain the wind ceased, but the intense blackness remained.

About midnight we came to a sudden stop. Mr. Taylor was driving the span of mules attached to the light wagon, and was in the lead of our train, followed by the carriage. Somehow he got the idea that a wagon ahead was backing into him. He set up a yell, warning the imaginary driver off and commenced backing to avoid a collision and backed into the carriage team, which sheared off, cramping the vehicle so hard

as to break a wheel badly. Then there were more yells from out the darkness, and Taylor stopped his team to see what was doing. A hasty survey was made of the disabled carriage, and the necessity for camping on the spot became apparent.

The accident was without warrant. Taylor must have suddenly acquired a bad case of buck fever; there was no wagon in front of him at all, and as he could not see the ears of the mules he was driving he could not tell why he thought there was a wagon there; but a few feet ahead was a steep descent into a deep ravine into which every wagon ahead plunged pell-mell, down the incline of about six hundred feet. Fortunately there were no collisions. The bed of the ravine was dry, but picks and spades were gotten out, and on digging about three feet, water of fair quantity was found; a pit or two more furnished water for the animals and the whole party.

No supper was spread, but those who desired to eat made the remains of dinner and some hard tack serve the purpose. The drive of the day was the longest of the whole journey, covering about forty miles. A nice breeze relegated the mosquitoes to another region, and a good sleep was enjoyed the remainder of the night, albeit preparing secure and comfortable beds was no joke, with ladies to be cared for and without the tent. As it became quiet and warm when sleeping time finally came a number of men spread their beds in the open air or under the wagons without ill effects.

Camp 19, June 28.—As morning dawned it

was found that the damage to the carriage wheel was not irremediable, the worst feature being the breaking of seven spokes at the hub. Mr. Taylor, who thought himself blamable for the accident, did not sleep at all during the night, but at the faintest ray of light took a good axe and started for a grove of trees by the river, full two miles distant. He chopped down a cottonwood about ten inches in diameter, cut off a section long enough to make spokes, shouldered it—no light load, by the way, it being a green stick—and returned to camp before breakfast was prepared.

Preparations were made early to repair the broken wheel, Taylor expecting to carve spokes out of that green, soggy log. I might have saved him some hard tramping had he communicated his design; I had forestalled such an accident by securing a piece of oak plank from an Iowa neighbor who was traveling with us; the plank was about two feet long by twelve inches wide and an inch and a quarter thick. This neighbor was about to break the board up into firewood when I traded him out of it by giving him an equivalent in dry drift cottonwood which I had fished out of the river several days before.

I endeavored to hide the board on the sly in the big wagon when the driver, instead of thinking with me that it might be of value, forbade me to put it in with his load. I did it a little later, however, when he was not looking. Here was the anticipated necessity and I got out my piece of concealed hard wood lumber. Having the required tools and the skilled workmen, it did not

take long to shape those spokes and have timber left for any further contingency.

That injured wheel was rebuilt, all four tires of the carriage set and our party on the road by 11 o'clock. The new wheel was well smeared with bacon grease as a substitute for paint. The ladies took advantage of the delay to bake some excellent bread, cakes and other good things.

By way of further explanation: When civilization was reached that carriage was repainted, and it was in use for over fifteen years afterwards; that wheel, repaired in the midst of the desert, was as good at the end of that time as the day it was rebuilt.

Of course the drive was short to-day, about sixteen miles. No wood, not even a dry willow brush, but plenty of feed and water, as we camped by the river. As there was drift wood lodged on the bank across the channel, on an island, I took a line, made of lariats tied together, swam the channel, lashed several small dry logs with it, dumped them in the stream and hanging on to the raft as a buoy, floated back to camp. The wood when the surface water dripped off was dry enough for a fire, and the supply lasted two days.

This kind of exercise came up to my notion of getting all the available experience I could. My ideas on that subject underwent a change later on, however, and I ceased to do much swimming.

Sunday, June 29.—Among civilized people the Sabbath is denominated a day of rest. With us under the circumstances in which we found our-

selves it was quite otherwise. We tried in vain to reach this point yesterday in time to do our week's "slicking up" and make some necessary repairs. The laundry work was properly attended to, the ladies of our household again doing, in addition, a large baking, until they wearied themselves completely. One of the ladies, Miss Ellen, consoled herself, after her hard day's work, by humming the words of the song made to describe Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe on his lonely island home:

"The sound of the church-going bell,
These valleys and rocks never heard,
Ne'er sighed at the sound of a knell,
Or smiled when a Sabbath appeared."

The tires on the heavy wagon had to be set, which our blacksmiths accomplished with neatness and dispatch, besides obliging neighbors by assisting them in making repairs.

A heavy storm arose in the evening and rain fell in copious quantities; but the tent was a good one and shed water nicely. Rained without interruption the entire night, but unaccompanied by thunder and lightning, which was quite remarkable in this storm centre. Guard duty under such conditions is not the pleasantest thing in the world by great odds.

Camp 20, June 30.—Started out at an early hour, hoping to make a good day's travel. The morning was threatening, and before noon the rain commenced falling heavily. We trudged

along, with the rain directly in our faces, making the best we could out of the dismal conditions. The road was alternately heavy with sand and sticky and deep with mud. The crossing of Skunk Creek—that miserable day made the creek name sufficiently expressive—was made with little trouble, though the recent rains had swollen the little stream greatly. When Pawnee Springs were reached camp was fixed, and we made ourselves as comfortable as possible for the night. The beautiful starlit night made some amends for a bad day and seemed to indicate pleasant weather on the morrow.

Our camp was opposite the point where the two Platte rivers, the North Fork and the South Fork—in this region a branch of any river or even a small stream is a “fork”—form a junction. The South Platte, which rises somewhere in the great mountain system south and west of the city of Denver in Colorado, receives more tributaries than the North Platte and consequently carries more water, especially in the snow melting season. The tremendous flood of water pouring into the North Platte is a yellow tide, thick with mud washed from the country through which it flows and could be seen a long distance from the vantage of our camp. The two “forks” run parallel for a long distance, not many miles apart.

The plains all around are bleak and desolate, barren enough to all intents and almost, one can readily believe, under the ban of the Creator; forbidding in every conceivable aspect. This place seems to have been the favorite highway of the great herds of buffalo, as they passed from north

to south, or vice versa, indicated by numerous paths and thousands of "buffalo wallows" deep, saucer-like, circular holes in the sands where those natives of the plains have wallowed and rolled to get rid of the tormenting insects which in this region make animal life a burden. In past days the buffaloes, in bands numbering thousands, sometimes nearly a hundred thousand, have gone north in summer, returning south in winter along this pathway. Not an animal could be seen now, though countless thousands of their skulls and skeletons lie scattered everywhere in silent testimony to the ruthless slaughtering work of Indians and robe hunters. That magnificent beast was rapidly disappearing from a section of the continent where once he roamed at will in bands aggregating millions, almost entirely to satisfy the greed for robes alone.

One even month has passed since we took the road.

Altitude at this junction is two thousand six hundred and eighty-five feet, one thousand six hundred and nineteen feet above Omaha, which is distant two hundred and ninety-seven miles east.

Camp 21, July 1.—The morning was cloudy, damp and heavy. Turning out under such conditions just at daybreak, after a little more than half a night's sleep, makes one dreamily recall quiet hours, downy couches, comfortable rooms and other accessories which go to make up a quiet home life. The realities of the situation out here called for forbearance and courage. No time for coddling stiff joints, sore muscles or tender feet;

get up without wasting time; take your allotted task, whatever the same be, gathering wood, getting water, hunting up grazing ground for your charge of mules, or packing up camp equipage. Head pains or bones aching count for nothing.

The storm of the last night served to clear the air and make very bad roads for a portion of the day; after that they were good. Low places in the trail gathered water enough to cause an annoyance and creek bottoms were muddy and troublesome part of the way. The clouds rolled by in good time in the forenoon, and the remainder of the day was delightful, a strong contrast to days just past.

Last night several other small unattached companies came up, and we formed a combination offensive and defensive, which was to last at least until Fort Laramie was reached. Our little army now numbered twenty-five effective men and eleven women. Our new associates appeared to be very agreeable people, rather above the average of those we had so far encountered. Disagreeable traits, however, were developing in diverse forms and places.

We met two trains of Mormons to-day, about two hours apart. The first consisted of forty wagons, the second fifty-five, with an average of five yoke of cattle to each wagon. The trains were bound to the Missouri River border for merchandise, and the recruits which might be assembled there. In these trains there was but one man to a wagon; that was quite enough, as the foul and bestial mouthings noted on a previous occa-

sion were repeated with some additional expressions of unctuous Mormon delight.

The "black snake" whip these men drove their cattle with was a devilish invention for producing



BLACK SNAKE WHIP.

exquisite torture on patient, unoffending oxen. It was made of rawhide with a handle about two feet in length. The braided rawhide lash may be thirty-five or more feet in length, swelling about

ten feet from the handle to a cable as large as a child's arm, thence tapering to a point, or "cracker." When the man with one of these infernal implements wanted to terrify his cattle he would commence to yell and with peculiar and expert motions and manipulations of the handle he soon had the long lash writhing and cutting the air like a hissing serpent; a little twist would send a coil to the end which would crack like a pistol; or, if he chose, which he usually did, to send that coil to the flank of some ox he could cut through the thick hide and make a wound as with a knife.

Plainsmen expert with these terrible whips boasted of being able to take a man's hand off twenty-five feet away. I accepted the story without further evidence, after witnessing to-day's performance.

We were informed now that for the next two hundred miles or more very little material could be found for fire wood, so it behooved emigrants to take heed that they secure a supply and be not too lavish in its use.

The valley spread out before and around us was broken only by low hills; the horizon reached down to the edge of the desert like a vast canopy, as though it was the end of all and final stopping place. The road we were now following, practically level, with occasional sand hill exceptions, is nearly five hundred miles in extent. After that the mountains.

I did some swimming this evening, crossing to an island for drift wood. Secured what I went after and sent it back, lashed with a lariat. No other member of our party seemed inclined to

divide the swimming privilege with me, so I held a monopoly.

Camp 22, July 2.—Tramp, tramp, tramp to-day along a trail good, bad and indifferent, chiefly the last two. Two creeks were crossed this morning that were not very far apart; not very deep as to water, but very deep as to mud, with approaches badly cut down. Two teams got stuck in the mud, and it was necessary to double up to pull out; this was not a pleasant task, besides wading in the deep mud and water, to render assistance. It was not serious, however, was soon righted and the cavalcade moved on.

The noon camp was near a large spring of cold water; buffalo grass in small patches widely separated afforded the animals a fair allowance. A few billets of willow and cottonwood we had brought along sufficed for brewing an excellent cup of coffee, and frying the familiar "steak" cut from a side of bacon.

All the creeks and "rivers" coming down from the north now were clear, showing that none of them carry flood water from melting snow at this time of year; it had evidently all melted and run off.

To avoid low and swampy places met with frequently we took a long and circuitous road towards the bluffs. The sand was hot and deep, and the hills encountered made heavy pulling.

An elegantly fitted up train, consisting of several wagons and a handsome covered carriage, or barouche, all drawn by splendid horses, one span on some of the wagons and two on others, came

up with and passed us this afternoon; there were no mules in the outfit. The carriage was occupied by two ladies and two gentlemen, who seemed to be out on a holiday excursion, with a driver on the outside seat. The horses were well fed and groomed, and wherever the road permitted they were kept up to a good speed, trotting along at times, oblivious of what the future might have in store for the party. In the light of our experience and what was noticeable with other trains, the distance covered by this pleasure-seeking excursion party each day seemed like wearing out valuable stock in useless, headlong speed and inviting certain disaster. The members of that company made no friendly acquaintance on the way, keeping aloof from all, and no one knew who they were or where they were going. It was evident that they had slight comprehension of what they were likely to encounter or have to endure.

The appearance of mirage several times yesterday and to-day was a pleasant variation to desert monotony and excited some curious attention. The principal feature in each case was the appearance of beautiful streams and sheets of silvery water in the distance, and islands fringed with green trees and all manner of shrubbery. We seemed to come up out of such places over a well-defined pathway, the road leading along into other similar places of sylvan beauty beyond. These desert illusions are very deceptive and oftentimes very cruel.

Bunch grass was excellent at the camp ground this evening, and the mules showed proper appre-

ciation of it; water was brackish and otherwise tainted, which required it to be boiled and then settled with a handful of meal to render it palatable. I waded a slough this time for drift wood before supper cooking could commence.

A large number of emigrant wagons came up to our camp ground and located around us, making quite an imposing show.

CHAPTER XI.

A Severe Wind Causes Delay—A Long Distance from Anywhere—Eighty-seventh National Anniversary—Almost a Tragedy—Mosquitoes and Mosquitoes—Petits Diables—Another Mormon Caravan—"U. S. Q. M."—Unique Fourth of July Celebration—Graves by the Wayside—Cooling Springs—Terrapin Stew—Ash Hollow, an Old Battle Ground—Prairie Dog Villages—Making a Shooting Record—A Severe Sand Storm—Hunting Out the Rattlesnakes—"Ancient Bluff Ruins"—Chimney Rock and Castle Rock—A Side Excursion.

CAMP 23, July 3.—Same tedious drudgery of travel to-day; the roads averaged about as before, up hill and down, deep with sand and dust, and a strong wind to drive against. A slight accident, the breaking an evenner on the leading team while pulling through a heavy place caused a brief delay. The breaking of that evenner saved a more serious accident.

The wind increased with such violence that it became necessary to stop in as favorable a location as could be obtained for protection and so dispose the wagons that the force of it was expended lengthwise the wagon body and not broadside, as otherwise the canvas cover might have offered so much surface to the wind as to have been blown off or otherwise injured. These

severe storms were not frequent, but occurred too often to be pleasant. About two hours' time was lost by this stoppage, and then the wind died away, leaving a calm and quiet day, as tho nothing disagreeable had preceded and interrupted movements.

A circumstance took place at noon to-day, which came dangerously near being a tragedy. The guns belonging to the members of the party were kept hanging in the wagons, suspended from the bows of the cover frame by convenient straps, muzzles pointing to the rear. Four of these guns were in the main or heavy wagon. They were always kept loaded, but for safety an oiled rag was placed over the nipples under the hammer. As Goodrich was stowing things into his wagon after dinner something came in contact with one of the guns and the jar set both barrels off simultaneously. The heavy charges of buckshot passed very close to his head, cutting away a portion of the rim of his hat and scorching his hair; he was stunned for a moment, but was otherwise uninjured; it came very near being a frightful casualty. The gun going off in the manner it did was an incomprehensible mystery, as on examination the oiled rag was still over the lock and there was nothing within eighteen inches of the gun when the explosion took place.

Here we found ourselves that quiet, pleasant evening, about five hundred miles from anywhere else, in the dreary desert wilds of Western Nebraska, on the eve of the eighty-seventh anniversary of American independence. A lingering boyish feeling of wanting to do something to make a

resounding, patriotic noise seemed to take possession of every man on the camp ground. The word had been properly passed around, and its importance urged on all, that demonstration, in the way of shooting, must be repressed until day-break. If guns were fired around a camp in the night, circumstanced as we were, it would certainly cause the idea to go out to other camps that there was trouble, perhaps a raid of some kind, and lead to misapprehension. But when daylight appeared, all restraint may be declared off and shooting and making any other kind of desired noise would be permissible, the louder the better, in honor of the occasion.

Camp 24, July 4.—Struck camp this morning at rather a later hour than usual, and then made but a short drive, chiefly to obtain a better camping location if possible and get the needed rest which was denied us last night and also to better enjoy our lonely holiday, "the day we celebrate." "Tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep," etc., did not materialize to an alarming degree last night, owing to the myriads and myriads—it can hardly be expressed strongly enough to describe the great invasion—of mosquitoes, the winged vampires of the plains.

It was a hideous night; the only way that existence was prolonged until cool air and day-break put the most of the pests to flight was to wrap one's head and face completely, with barely a breathing space left open, and to see to it that one's hands were well under cover. The animals of the entire encampment were fairly stung to

madness and were unable to feed because of the scourge, keeping up an unceasing kicking and braying. Faces in the morning resembled a well-populated ward in a smallpox hospital. The French call mosquitoes "petits diables"; that people have a way of applying exact names to things, especially the unspeakable mosquito.

We encountered to-day another large Mormon train east bound after more goods and recruits for the Latter Day Apostle's realm, Salt Lake City and Utah. For some reason unknown to us this particular caravan passed without opening the flood gates of Mormon vituperation and concentrated vulgarity; in only a few instances did a driver repeat a portion of his vile vocabulary such as we had cause to expect from Mormon caravans. It was an inexpressible relief. It seemed somewhat peculiar that on the sides of nearly all the big wagons in this Mormon freighting caravan were stenciled the letters "U. S. Q. M." in large letters. The same peculiarity was noticed also on nearly all wagons of similar build in the Mormon trains previously met with. What significance there may have been in this was a trifle obscure. It is part of our country's military history that a good-sized army was sent against the Mormon, in 1857, and that the expedition was a wretched failure. But whether they got those wagons as they are credited with getting army supplies and the cattle of emigrants was a problem to us just then.

Nothing in our surroundings reminded us that this was the eighty-seventh anniversary of American independence; the calendar was the only con-

clusive guide. A few early risers started a fusillade with revolvers and guns as a reminder that the day which means so much to American youth had really arrived and still in memory.

A score or so of "footmen" started in about 8 o'clock to see what might be developed toward a regular patriotic outbreak of the regulation Fourth of July noise. One of the party fished up a little printed American flag from somewhere, and the grand old stars and stripes, rippling in the breeze from the peak of a tall flag-staff, never possessed more power to stimulate men than did that diminutive print when it stirred up that company as they tramped their weary way through the dust and sand of that desert plain. Guns and revolvers were fired indiscriminately in the air, "Yankee Doodle," "Star Spangled Banner," "America," "Red, White and Blue," "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean" and other patriotic airs were sung or shouted in all kinds of time and tune until everybody was tired and hoarse. When the last round of cheers were given and salute fired, and the powder smoke inhaled, the full effects of the energetic vocal exercises were felt when we found ourselves without a drop of water and a long distance from a source of supply. There were no orations, no speech-making, no bells to ring, no cannons to fire, but our little demonstration did every man who participated in it as much good, out on that scorching desert, as if he were surrounded by all the accessories of a city full of people and means of a systematic display. It was a wearisome tramp

after this flow of patriotism to find a flow of water.

On the whole, considering all the surroundings, we concluded that our Fourth of July celebration in 1862, without the fringes and scallops of civilization, was as unique and as patriotic as could well be devised, even without the tail-twisting, spread eagle speeches, the display of oratorical patriots, the banquet for the very select, or the fireworks. Its success is recorded here as part of these chronicles.

We passed by the wayside a number of new-made graves of pilgrims who had found the end of their earthly journey sooner than anticipated and under circumstances of chilling depression. The few stones to be found near where they were buried had been gathered and arranged on and around the graves, the better to protect the bodies from coyotes and wolves, and not always with success, as those pestiferous animals have grave-robbing charged up with their other many offences.

A fair camping place was found at an early hour with greasewood and sagebrush enough to give the omnipresent mosquito a good "smoker." Crossed many creeks, shallow as to water, deep as to mud and wide as to every crossing.

A fitting close of our patriotic demonstrations of the day was in having an addition to our bill of fare at supper, which almost raised that uniform meal to the dignity of a banquet. Among our commissary stores were two or three cans of tomatoes which had kept remarkably well; they had been carefully preserved for some signal

event, no doubt; and here was the event. To further signalize the "day we celebrate," two cans were opened, and their contents served in stew and soup. The company thought nothing ever tasted half so good. Taking surroundings into account with steady service of bacon and beans this simple vegetable came very near being the delightful change it was said to be, on that patriotic occasion. Perhaps it was the only time tomatoes were ever served as a course at a Fourth of July banquet. Some of our neighbors were permitted to share the feast with us.

Picketing mules, gathering fuel, writing notes and standing a trick on guard, pretty well filled one's evening hours.

Camp 25, July 5.—The enjoyment of a good long rest last night gave renewed energy for an early start this morning. The roads, just as nature provided the right of way and the first wagons years ago outlined the track, were both good and bad—good when on hard ground, bad when sandy or muddy at creek crossings.

Forded several small creeks easily and floundered through a few larger and muddier ones. I gathered some flood wood from the river, waterlogged and heavy; this was broken into small bits and spread out in the torrid sun at noon to drip and dry, as it could, and then was stowed in the wagons for the rest of the drying process. The matter of wood through this barren region was one of serious import this year. "Buffalo chips"—the anthracite of the plains—being out of the question, as the buffalo had gone, and timber

was scarce and distant ; it was quite necessary that everything that would burn be gathered and cared for ; so when I saw a stick drifting in the river or lodged on the bank I was apt to secure it promptly.

The first rocky bluffs since leaving the Elkhorn River came in view to-day ; they are of a sandstone formation, interspersed with granite and boulders, and measured in the miles of the desert are of considerable extent.

Camp was located on Wolf Creek, at the foot of sandy bluffs. The crossing was troublesome, it being necessary to double teams on each wagon to make it without stalling. After the supper work had been concluded a pleasant evening was passed among visiting fellow pilgrims, as a large party had gathered for the night at this stopping place. A clear, bright moonlight added attractions to the scene, and a mellowness to the atmosphere which softened the oppressive feelings of the day. Music and dancing were indulged in by the more ardent members of the party.

Along in the evening one of our neighbors caught a large turtle which a skilled cook in the company quickly turned into soup, a large kettle full. All hands enjoyed a dish of it. Delightful ? Well, the memory of that treat lingers still. No club terrapin ever tasted half so good.

Mild remedies for affections of the eyes incident to sun-glare on the white sand and irritation caused by the alkali dust were in constant demand, nearly every one needing such lotions at frequent intervals.

Camp 26, Sunday, July 6.—The road climbed up to the plateau on the crest of the bluff mentioned yesterday. It was the most serious exertion so far on the journey, consuming an hour and a half to cross it, and worried the animals considerably. Frequent stops had to be made on the steep incline, and the wheels to be blocked to ease the mules. Intense heat added its exhausting features.

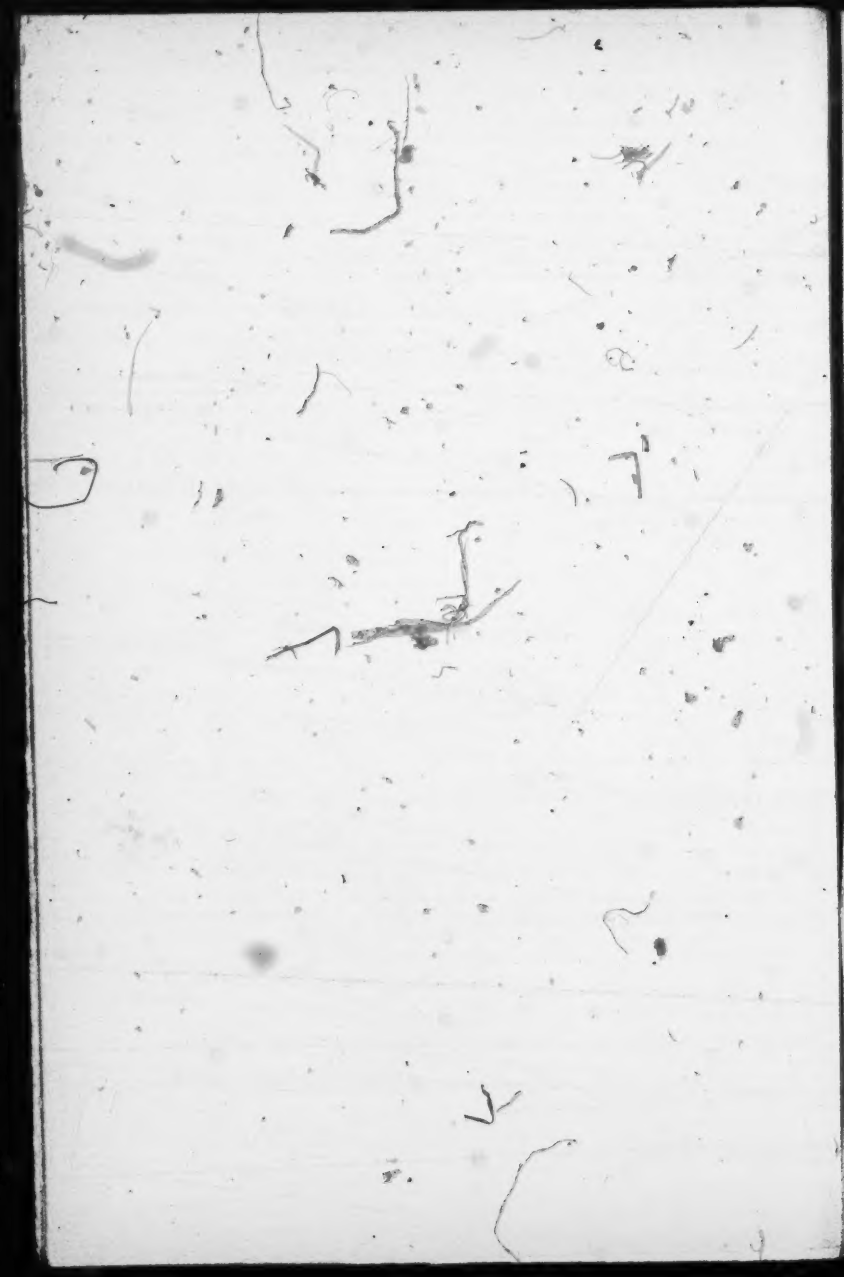
After this bluff was passed the roads were good. Waded innumerable little streams. Names of these numerous streams of the past two or three days are peculiar; they have titles given to them to preserve the euphony of things, I judge. Such as Rattlesnake, Skunk, Carrion, Black Mud, Goose, Wolf and similar expressive names were on the list. No effort was made to ascertain from interviews with any of the living subjects why such cognomens were given; neither did the subjects interview us; they might all have been just plain rattlesnake, and not been amiss, as that slimy reptile was everywhere in evidence.

The noon halt was made at a point opposite to Ash Hollow, a locality on the south side of the river. From our stand of observation, it seemed like a fair-sized valley, independent of the big valley, depressed from the surface of the south bluffs.

Ash Hollow was a place of great importance to the Sioux Indians in former times, as it was uniformly selected as a great camping ground, when they were on the war path. It was here that General Harney found an immense body of them in 1859, when he proceeded to whip them as they



PRAIRIE DOG VILLAGE.



had never before been whipped. It was a great victory over the redskins and seemed to be all the fighting they wanted with the whites for a long time.

Camped in a passable location on Castle Creek, opposite Castle Rock, a rocky formation also on the south side of the river. This creek was swift and had a treacherous quicksand bottom; it required haste to get through it without trouble.

Camp 27, July 7.—Struck camp just at day-break for a long day's drive over a portion of country which is exceptionally desolate, about thirty miles in extent, where grass and water were difficult to obtain. The roads were in our favor, being very good, but the sun was pitiless and the sand hot to the blistering point if it worked into one's shoes. The heat shimmered and waved out over the glistening sand until one's eyes became inflamed and "snow-blind" from the effects of it.

Passed through vast prairie dog villages where thousands of the little creatures could be seen at one time sitting on their haunches, watching passing trains and chirping to each other their astonishment at the immense moving caravan. These dog towns were from one to twenty miles in extent, and the population was simply enormous. A number of the dogs were fired at as they sat up and tantalized the shooter, but none were hit. It had been said they see the man at the gun touch the trigger, then they dodge and disappear into their burrows. Certain it is that they are not easily shot by expert marksmen.

Every footman carried his gun—a true gun, not a pistol, called one in western parlance—he couldn't tell why, as there was nothing in the world to shoot but snakes; and a forked stick or a stone is the best thing to shoot them with; at a prairie dog village he was ready to try his aim, and generally failed; it was a discredit to him as a marksman to fail.

I had not taken interest enough in the practice to shoot at a dog, though I had an elegant rifle; finally some one bantered me to try a shot, and to humor him more than hoping to succeed, I dropped on one knee, and taking deliberate aim, fired; I hit the mark and my dog tumbled over, shot through the neck. I went over to his burrow, about fifty yards away, for my trophy. This little creature is a cross between a woodchuck and a ground squirrel, but much larger. They are fat, with a grayish red fur; trappers and Indians eat them after leaving the flesh exposed over night or to a frost to extract any rankness. They are vegetarians entirely, and, therefore, there is no good reason why the flesh should not be wholesome, in dearth of other meat at least.

This shot established my reputation, incidentally also that of the gun I owned. I was envied the ownership of the arm, and its possession stood me in good stead, as will hereafter appear.

But to save my easily acquired reputation, I shot at no more prairie dogs. A fellow traveler, one who was driving a freight wagon, was a witness to my successful shot and expressed great admiration for the gun.

Late in the evening the toilsome day's journey ended, and it did not take the camp long to prepare the few dishes which constituted a supper and settle into quietness and slumber. Fitting one's self around a bunch or two of greasewood or sagebrush so as to get into a comfortable position to sleep has its drawbacks, at least until the stones have been removed and the rattlesnakes have been hunted out of the vicinity and slain, as it was frequently necessary to do.

Camp 28, July 8, was located on the banks of the Platte, in an excellent place for all emigrant requirements; wood, water and grass, and a sheltering nook, secure from severe sweeping winds. Such a blow occurred to-day and caused great inconvenience and no small amount of labor to clear out from among the stores and personal baggage, the sand and dust which accompanied and really was the principal part of the storm that swooped down on us on short notice in the afternoon. The road—called a trail now, road is obsolete—was good, skirting along a low, sandy bluff. The day was cool and pleasant, excepting the storm flurry mentioned above.

The bluff to the north assumed in places some very singular forms, as seen at a distance, some wonderfully like castles and other enormous buildings, towers, fortifications and the like, and one a capitol dome, while some prominent points represented monster animals or grotesque figures, as tho some able pre-historic Indian artist had attempted to carve out gigantic gods. Of course the pilgrim must squint with the other eye and

imagine a little in order to get the full effect of appearances; but atmospheric conditions helped somewhat.

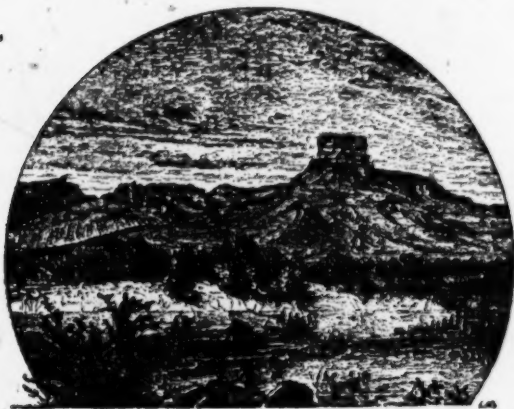
The guide books put this place down as "Ancient Bluff Ruins," but guide books are made for strangers' use in an unknown country and are sometimes thought to be a trifle enthusiastic.

As our party was short on entertainments, I started out this morning after the train had commenced the day's journey, to inspect these "ruins" at close range. There must be a mystery or "tradition" in regard to these heaps of sandstone to add to the wonders of the surrounding desolation, else the glamour would be incomplete. I found the "ruins" to have evidently been a range of considerable magnitude at a time when the earth was young, composed of a yellowish marl, very friable and easily cut with a knife, the fantastic shapes caused by some places being more affected by wind and water than the harder places. The whole chain is generally disappearing by erosion and wash; the storm of yesterday did its portion of the work, the evidence being apparent.

Behind the main range was an isolated mound, slightly elevated above the rest, composed of various form of rocks, one very like a large dog. Wearying of this kind of exploration, I picked a few very pretty wild flowers and secured some almost transparent pebbles as souvenirs, and headed for the train, reaching it at midday in time to dine on a spread of bacon, beans, crackers and dried apple pie and a good brew of tea.

Immediately opposite these bluff "ruins," on

the south side of the river, is "Castle" or "Court House Rock," another guide book curiosity, so called from its fancied resemblance to an ancient



CASTLE ROCK.

castle or court house, if one lets an optical delusion do an appropriate part of it. The rock stands isolated from the bluff it was a part of, and can be seen at a great distance.

CHAPTER XII.

Stalled in the Mud—Opposite Chimney Rock—A Strange Formation—Attempting to Swim the Platte—A Nearly Fatal Experiment—My Ideas Undergo a Change—Visit from Friendly Indians—Gratifying a Robust Appetite—Scott's Bluffs—Black Hills—Indian Village—A Pawnee Chief—Sulphur Springs—Trading with the Indians—Pretty Pawnee Squaws—The Mosquito Terror—An Indian Remedy for Mosquito Stings—Mormons Again—Laramie Peak—Alkali Springs and Rattlesnakes—Arrive at Fort Laramie—Judge Hewitt Overtakes Us—A Reunited Party—A Long Overland Stage Journey—Fort Laramie, an Old Trading Post—A Humorous Station Keeper.

CAMP 29, July 9.—Camp was again made on the bank of the river where a little creek of clear, running water emptied into it. The weather was delightful for traveling and the roads good for the forenoon, but rough and rocky the rest of the time, with numerous little creeks to ford and swampy places to cross, caused by the river overflowing. The crossings had been cut and worn down by the great number of the emigrant trains until they were all from one to two hundred yards wide and deep with mud.

Progress was slow; frequently a heavily loaded wagon would be stalled; at such times the com-

panies traveling together would double the teams, or help with a pair of oxen, by making a lariat fast, doubled to the tongue of the stalled wagon, the extra team being on hard ground; by this means the whole train would be pulled through, one wagon at a time, the entire train standing together to aid one another. These friendly



CHIMNEY ROCK.

offices were freely done for each other by the emigrants.

The noon halt was made near the river and due south across it was "Chimney Rock," apparently rising from the very bank of the stream. It seemed to be a rough specimen of monumental art, nature's handiwork. The column or obelisk stands on a pedestal or base very broad at the bottom, tapering to the center. The base looked to

be a broad band of whitish material like chalk, which makes the shaft seem higher than it actually is. Fremont's exploration makes this column about two hundred feet high in 1843; old trappers say it used to be five hundred feet elevation. To us it was about one hundred and fifty feet high. All evidence shows that it was gradually disappearing, wearing away by time and the action of the elements.

Several of the party bathed in the river here in a secure little cove, and while thus disporting some one proposed crossing the river to more closely inspect this pile of rock. Knit bathing suits were not a part of our outfit; our suits were bare skin. As the spirit of adventure was strong, and as I thought myself a good and safe swimmer, two of us started out. The river was fully a mile wide and running bank full and more, though shallow generally. My companion, a man named Black, was a much stronger man than I. We started out very confidently, and what with wading channels and passing over sandbars, had compassed most of the distance. The main channel was on the south bank, we found, but with a confidence born of much self-assurance, we plunged in; we might as well have tried to wade the rapids of Niagara. The current was deep and swift, running like a torrent, about twelve miles an hour. We started for the Missouri River at a giddy pace, sidewise, feet first or head first, as the lumpy water dictated. Black yelled for me to make for shore; he succeeded in getting out on a quicksand bar, and started for the place where

our clothing was. I missed the spot and went down with the irresistible current.

Black saw the situation I was in, and he made hot haste to get out of the river so that he might help me. The river took a great bend at this point, and was cutting away the north bank at a rapid rate. I could not swim much at this odds, only keep afloat and do a little steering. The current was running strong to the north bank of the river, touching it at the lower point of this bend; toward this point I aimed, hoping to make land. Black got into his trousers quickly, mounted a mule and induced that animal to make the race of his life around that bend; they reached it before I did by a few seconds, and as I came surging along, he lay down on the soft, yielding bank and caught me by the hair; then I grabbed his hand and floated out without further exertion until recovering breath, when I was enabled to get a foothold, and so climbed out on the yielding bank.

This performance was over about a five-mile course, and came dangerously near being the last for me; in that case this memoir, of a certainty, would not have been committed to paper. For some years past I could not be caught by the hair on the top of my head; an Indian would disdain the scalp. One of the party took another mule, gathered our clothing and carried it down to us. We got back to camp pretty well used up. This ended our experimenting with the Platte River and modified my notions somewhat, as it was my second experience in regard to river currents and swimming. Traveled only three miles that afternoon, because of the delay narrated above.

In the evening received a visit from friendly Sioux Indians, they were really, very pleasant callers—for Indians. Inquisitive, perhaps, but not in any other way obtrusive.

A storm towards midnight gave indications of severity, but resulted in being chiefly heavy wind. But the double lashings of the tent, called into use on such occasions, prevented any trouble to our household, consequent on a heavy wind.

As an evidence of what men will undergo to gratify appetite or to satisfy a large thirst, acquired easily by indulgence in strong distillates, an instance may be related: A trading post had been established in a valley north of the main trail where feed and water were in unlimited supply, necessary to campers. It was reported in the camps that night that real whiskey could be had there. As soon as supper was over there was "mounting in hot haste" and a score or more of men started out to get some of that liquor. The trading post was about ten miles away, but these men rode their tired horses out and back to get whiskey to drink, paying one dollar a glass therefor, the dealer measuring it out. It was probably a vile chemical compound, but it was pronounced good. Very little liquor of any kind was carried by emigrants; it would have been unsafe, as its indulgence would surely have led to trouble.

Camp 30, July 10.—Good roads all day made traveling something of an unusual comfort all round. Appearances indicated that the great range of mountains were nearer to us to-night than at any time previous. Scott's Bluffs, a



LARAMIE PEAK.



rocky ledge of great extent on the south side of the river, are noticeable from their isolated location and through the distance they can be seen. They apparently rise abruptly from the bank, for the most part very ragged, and in places perpendicular.

From the bluffs on our side of the river, the north, the Black Hills were conspicuously distinct: they are well named. The somber hue which envelopes these miniature mountains almost cast a shadow over the road we were traveling. They are ragged with many peaks of considerable altitude, and to judge from the standpoint we occupied at night, they offered great obstacles to the emigrants who might rashly presume to penetrate them. Laramie Peak is the most prominent elevation, and that was a long way off.

An early start was arranged, the intention being to make a short drive and camp by a creek, which plain's tradition, as it filters along down our line, said contained many fine mountain trout. That was enough to make even the plodding mules step to quick music. Vain and delusive hope; when we reached the creek we found many pleasant surroundings; but fish! We found that neither trout nor any other kind of fish had ever been known to exist there. The numerous deep and shady pools were very alluring, no doubt, but fish had never found them.

Passed on a few miles through an Indian village and located camp where the grass indicated good forage. Water sulphury, combined with other offensive ingredients, and quite warm. The story told of this place may be true, and it may

not: An old Dutchman and his family, it is said, were passing this way, and as the old gentleman desired to slake his thirst, he lay down by a hot sulphur spring, not knowing its temperature or peculiarity of taste, and took a good swig; that was quite enough. He jumped to his feet in alarm, blew the water out of his mouth and frantically waving his arms at his son, who was driving the cattle, yelled: "Drive on, Shon; drive on; hell is not more than one-half mile from dish place!" Things did smell a little infernal. The story is good enough to be true, at all events.

It was a matter of a tramp over a mile and a half from camp to get water fit to drink or cook with.

The Indian camp turned out to be a village of Pawnees, out on their regular summer vacation, perhaps. They all, big and little, old and young, and to the last discouraged and hungry dog, visited our camp, partly out of curiosity, partly to "swap"—that is, trade—for most anything. They had silver money in liberal quantities; for that they wanted "puff"—powder—more than anything else, but were ready to buy anything, if they could not pick things up on the sly or trade for them.

They offered very fine moccasins, buckskin trousers and jackets profusely ornamented with metallic colors and delicately cut fringe, for "tobac," beads, brass rings or red calico. Failing to trade they would pay in cash. Part of the late acquisition to our train included several parties who had loaded their wagons with things dear to the Indian heart and had come up into the Indian

country on purpose to trade. They reaped a big harvest that evening. A small handful, about one ounce, of glass beads of varied colors was half a dollar; so also a ring of brass number ten wire wound around the wrist or ankle; twice around, one dollar. One yard of red calico, fifty cents; red string, ten cents a yard, measured by the outstretched arm to the opposite shoulder. That trading outfit was better than a bank. Some of the young and prettier looking squaws had a dozen or more brass wire rings on wrist or ankles; they were badges of distinction among their people. Our party were importuned on many occasions for these articles, but had nothing of the kind to trade in; we had been held down to bare necessities.

The judge knew all about this trade with the Indians, and had the least intimation been given we could have made more clear money among the Indians in trading in these inexpensive articles than was ever made by an individual of our party by hard work in two years; and the addition to the load would hardly have been felt.

Some of the young Pawnee squaws were quite pretty—no doubt belles among their tribe—and were dressed finely in garments lavishly ornamented with colored glass beads, paint and burnt leather. Their faces were decorated in the highest art known and required in the upper circles of Pawnee society. The bucks were gorgeous in Indian togger. The saddles of their ponies were ingenious specimens of Indian artistic decoration.

The gnats and mosquitoes were simply over-

whelming, and all ease and comfort were banished; the faces of all the party were sadly disfigured. One old Pawnee Indian noticed this condition, and by various signs and "ughs" and rubbing his hands and face to relieve fancied torment, beckoned me to follow him. I did it unhesitatingly, knowing my safety. He took me some distance from camp, occasionally stopping to go through the motions, in pantomime, of picking something up and rubbing his hands with it until he finally found the weed he wanted, which he crushed with his fingers and rubbed his face with it, motioning me to do likewise; this I did, crushing a little spray of a green juicy weed and rubbing my face and hands with it. The relief was instantaneous—the Indians knew the remedy required; they are unlettered botanists, knowing the value of all herbs in their country.

The shrub, it seemed, was called the wild locust, indigenous to the plains and a sovereign remedy for the poison of insects. I gathered an armful of it, as did the Indian, and we carried the loads back to camp. Each one used some at once, and all were deeply grateful to the old Indian for his kindness; he got more presents of tobacco, red calico and trinkets out of that party for his friendliness; together with a small supply of powder, than he could ever have hoped to buy. That night we all experienced the most comfortable rest since entering the deserts of Nebraska.

Two more Mormon caravans came down the trail to-day, direct from "Zion," en route to the Missouri River, same as their predecessors; one train contained forty-nine wagons, the other



PAWNEE SQUAW AND PAPOOSE.

thirty-three, nearly all marked, as noted regarding the former train, "U. S. Q. M."

The drivers had some of the distinctive and offensive characteristics of their brothers ahead, and gave us the benefit of some of their ribald talk. They soon passed on and were lost to sight. None of those ill-born creatures seemed capable of decency or of restraining their foul tongues.

Pawnee and Cheyene squaws visited our camp, and those in the same vicinity occasionally, with papooses clinging to their necks or strapped to boards and carried on their backs. These dusky aboriginal people seemed to be as well pleased to exhibit their offspring to an admiring audience as any fond white mother could be. Not a papoose was heard to whimper at any time.

Camp 31, July 11.—The morning was cool and pleasant, and continued so for some time; the sun finally changed it all, and the air became hot and oppressive. Roads were passably good, though the deep sand was blistering and a torture to the flesh when the two came in contact. Prickly pear and sagebrush and its twin, greasewood, became more abundant.

Laramie Peak, away to the northward, the highest elevation in the Black Hills, towering well up above the dark blue peaks and frowning ridges, which constitute the Hills, was plainly in view all day, an early landmark for pilgrims over a trackless waste, who had no other guide to a new world but Laramie Peak and the sun which at night went out of their vision in the west.

Elk Mountain is another beautiful object of in-

terest, and could be seen frequently from different points, and is in appearance a tremendous buttress at the termination of the Medicine Bow Mountains. It is of uniform shape, as seen about fifty miles away, is upward of ten thousand feet in height and robed perpetually with snow.

The name of the valley—plains, always by general acceptance—stretch away for many miles over the country; changed now and became the Laramie Plains; the evidence of desert in all that the term means in its most repulsive features, was spread out before us more and more as we advanced. Alkaline springs, strongly impregnated, abounded, and it required constant care lest the animals should get to the poisonous fluid and drink enough to kill them outright, or sicken them so they were seriously injured. Rattlesnakes were a constant source of anxiety, several horses and mules belonging to other companies having died in indescribable agony because of being bitten by them; oxen seemed proof against the poison, if any had been struck. Horses seemed to be the most susceptible to the effects of snake poison of all the domestic animals.

All nature seemed to be assuming a forbidding aspect, and human nature, in many instances, seemed to absorb somewhat freely of the intolerable surroundings and was developing ugly moods. We separated from some of this latter class, preferring to be apart from them; ugliness is liable to develop progressively when unrestrained.

Cottonwood and willow timber on the north side of the river was a relief to the utter barrenness. Camp was made on a sand bank, the best



ELK MOUNTAIN.



place to be found when night approached. It was a most disagreeable situation, but accepted because of plenty of wood and water and a moderate amount, but enough, of forage. A systematic search was made for rattlesnakes before settling for the night, and nine of the venomous tribe rendered up their useless lives and their rattles to the hunters, the latter to be preserved as trophies.

Another slight rain shower passed over, accompanied by heavy wind and sharp thunder and lightning. We are well used to these atmospheric disturbances and, light or heavy, they are much the same.

To-morrow we anticipate reaching Fort Laramie and meeting the absent ones. In the bright starlight of the evening the glittering white sand of the great plains looks as tho the surface of the earth was covered with a heavy fall of snow; the snowy illusion was perfect.

Camp 32, July 14.—We had calculated exactly; we reached Fort Laramie early; all day we had, figuratively speaking, kept our "windows open toward Jerusalem," and when the buildings of the last military post on the plains came in view it gave us pleasurable emotions. There we found the absent ones ready to receive us on our arrival; they had been anxiously waiting for several days with no news or means of communicating; could only wait. The reunion was a joyous occasion after so many weeks of separation, sickness and death.

Judge Hewitt, with his wife and young daughter, had traveled on the overland stage, a wear-

some and dangerous journey of over five hundred miles through Kansas, starting from St. Joe. They left the stage at Julesburg, a station some miles southeast of Laramie, for at that point the stage route leads southward to Denver. The judge had secured private conveyance to reach Fort Laramie. The company were all together now, after fifty-seven days of compulsory separation. We had brought the train to this point, five hundred and twenty-six miles over the plains from Omaha, beside the one hundred and fifty miles through Missouri and Iowa, without serious accident or losing anything, and the judge took pains to congratulate us on our care and good management; gladly we turned over the outfit together with future cares and responsibilities, content in the realization that on us, from here to the end of the journey, our duty would be in obeying, instead of directing.

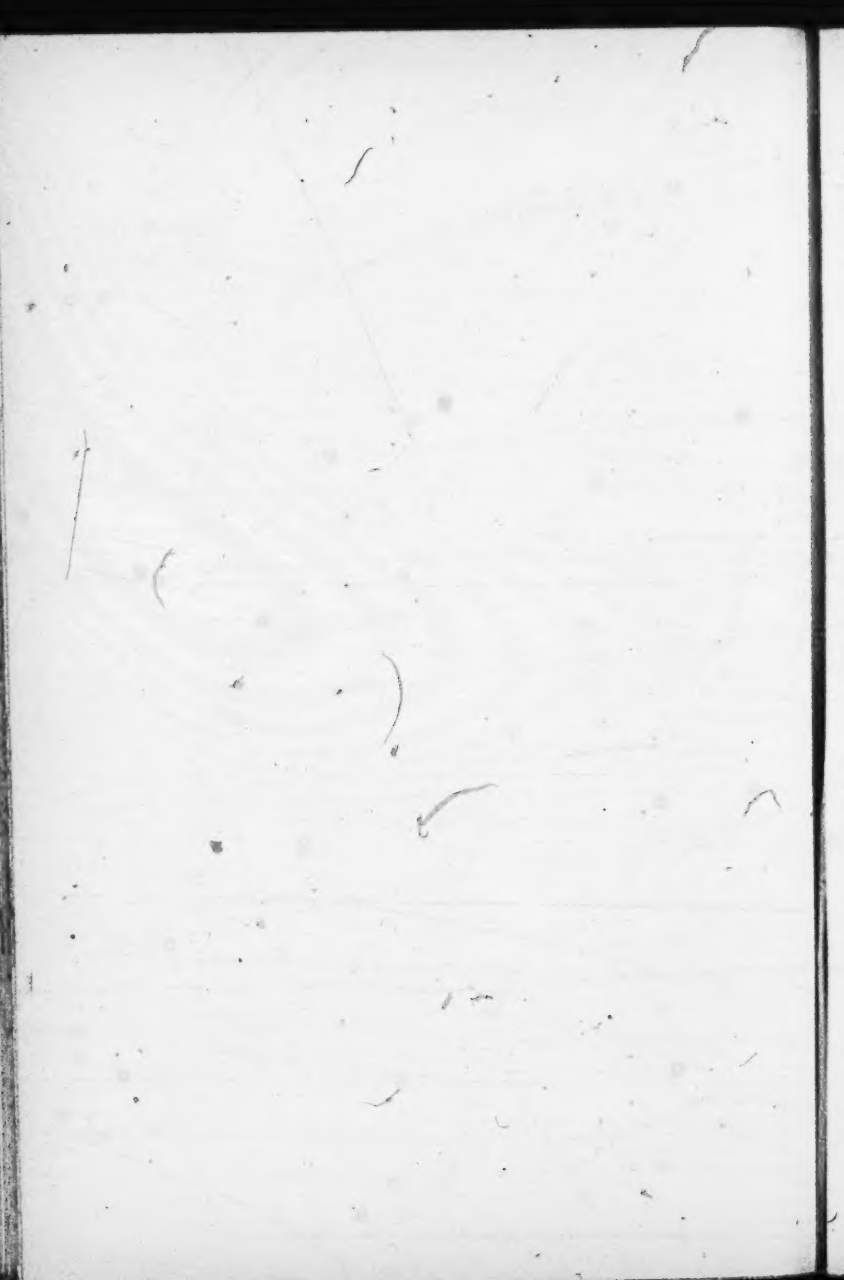
I was perhaps the only disappointed one in the party, but made no manifestation of it. The judge was to bring me some additional heavy clothing, a matter of some importance to me. Somehow in the long stage journey, where everything was hurry and excitement, my things were overlooked. I was reminded of this loss many times during the stinging nights of the weeks following.

The intense heat and dust of the day made things almost intolerable. All the stock were jaded and footsore, and by common consent every party encamped here determined to remain one day to rest and recruit.

A few scattering buffalo passed his way this year, but they seemed to be astray. About twelve



FORT LARAMIE.



years after our journey a herd of about six hundred went north, but none so far as the records show since then. The enormous amount of skulls, horns and bones of buffalo—it may be said without exaggeration the remains of millions of these animals—strewn over the plains everywhere, was a source of great profit in after years, as they were gathered up and shipped to the east, after the railroad was built, and ground into bone dust for fertilizer; an ignoble end for a noble animal. All things in nature have their uses.

This point is about thirty-seven hundred feet in elevation.

Fort Laramie was originally a fortified post, established by the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. The American Fur Company, which owed its origin to John Jacob Astor, was principally on the Pacific coast. Laramie was an important station in the heart of the country which was the favorite hunting ground and battlefield of the warlike and untamable tribes of Indians of the plains. Its history is full of tragedy, and if walls could talk many thrilling and blood-curdling tales could be told of wild scenes within and without its enclosure, during its occupancy, not only as a trading post, but later when it became a United States military establishment after the fur company had ceased to exist. Its elevation is seventy-one hundred and forty-nine feet, and the clear, bracing air is a guarantee against lung diseases of every kind.

At a wayside station or ranch house we passed to-day, in a lonely spot, was an amusing and suggestive combination of signs and mottoes. The

building was of the composite plains architecture, adobe walls thick enough for a fort, sod roof, dirt floor rammed hard, wide porch roof made of willow poles to serve the double purpose of affording a shade from an intense heat, and to protect the entrance from the heavy rain and hail storms of the region. The "lord of the manor" evidently had a twofold purpose in view in his location: first, to secure a quarter section of land, and to protect his rights as a "squatter" on public domain; and, second, to make a profit meantime in serving refreshments to such pilgrims or hunters as might pass his way and desire entertainment.

Three guide boards on the outside of the structure bore legends painted thereon with index fingers pointing in three several directions, all "hand painted," containing the information: "☞ 15 Miles to Wood;" pointing the opposite course was another, "☞ 3 Miles to Water;" the third pointing downwards read: "☞ 1 Mile to Hell!" The locality looked it. Within, suspended over the doorway, was the familiar motto, "God Bless Our Home." The ludicrous part of the combination had a very striking effect. In the distribution of home blessings that lonely household was no doubt as well served as any, tho the suggestion that it was only one mile from the orthodox place of future punishment would seem to have required an extra watchfulness and blessing.

CHAPTER XIII.

Serious Work of the Buffalo Gnat—Emigrant Lines Diverge—Indians Getting Troublesome—The Heat Very Intense—Terrific Thunder Storm—Serious Deprivation for Want of Water—Rattlesnake Hunting a Success—The Strain Beginning to Tell—Human Nature Developing—Platte Ferries Profitable—A Good Ford in the River—Disabled Mules—Making Camp at a Late Hour—Almost an Outbreak—Soda Lakes and Poisonous Water—Well Equipped Hunting Parties—Ruthless Slaughter of Buffalo.

THE little buffalo gnat developed into a serious menace and was causing much trouble. It would get under the harness where any part was close enough to the animal to cause a chafing and perspiration, and unless constant care was exercised the animals soon would have troublesome sores, especially under the saddle or collar, or both. There might not be a sign of such a thing in the morning, but by noon or night raw spots as large as one's hand, and very sensitive, would be found. We had some trouble of this kind, and to-day a thorough examination of the mules was made. All of them that had been under harness were affected. The grease fried from bacon was found to be the best remedy for the trouble.

Fort Laramie was admirably situated, on Laramie Fork of the Platte, a large, cold, very rapid

and pure stream from the Black Hills; buildings neat and tasty, chiefly made of adobe and accommodating, perhaps, two hundred and fifty men in case of necessity. It was an important post, as many scalp hunting Indians found to their serious cost. The hills and plains around the fort made a beautiful background. The pure water of the Laramie is quickly swallowed up by the yellow, muddy Platte.

At this point a large number of pilgrims forded the river on the next day—a safe thing to do, the water being shallow—to take the trail leading south into reported rich mining and farming districts in Colorado; none of these companies, so far as we had learned, contemplated going through to the Pacific coast. Hundreds started out without any clearly defined idea of where they were going, trusting to chance to get well located.

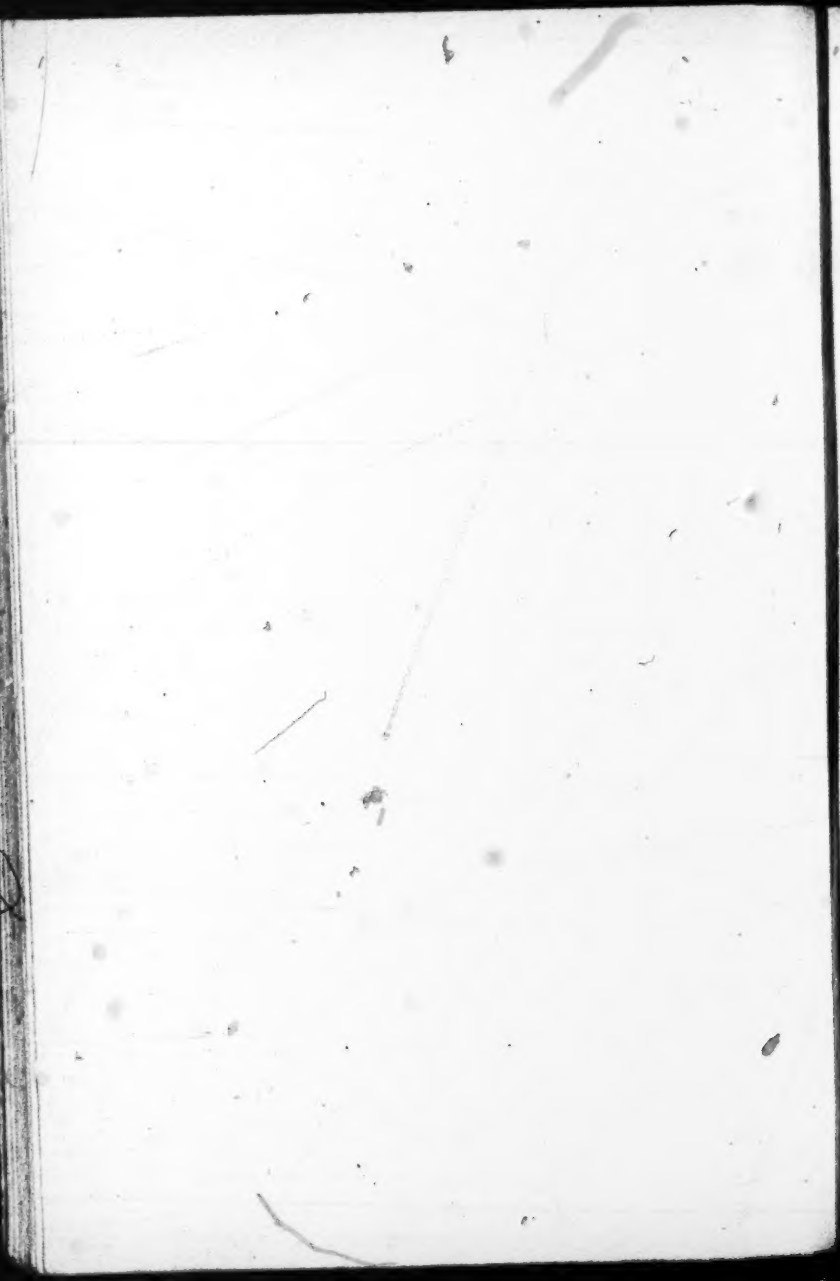
Abundance of fire wood gave an opportunity not to be overlooked to have a good camp fire, and as there was a large company assembled, the evening was pleasantly passed around the fires, the smokers and story tellers getting in full time.

The so-called escort had gone on two days before we arrived at Laramie, and its great herd of animals had pretty well denuded the earth in the places where feed was scant. Sending out that convoying guard was a strange action on the part of the Government, and as useless as it was burdensome to emigrants whose cattle needed the feed it consumed.

Information communicated by officers from the fort, who crossed the river to visit the emi-



LAST OF HIS NAME AND RACE.



grant camps, was not reassuring. Some of the untamable Indians of the plains were out on the warpath and causing trouble. Ostensibly making war on their Indian enemies, they were constantly stampeding the stock of emigrant trains, and marauding and robbing the emigrant also at every opportunity. A number of cavalry scouts—Long Knives the Indians called them—were out on their trail, but the army officers urged the necessity of emigrants combining into large parties for mutual protection.

Camp 33, July 14.—As the work of the day before was not completed with that full detail thought to be requisite for the journey ahead, our party remained in camp until after dinner.

A friendly combination of a few small companies that had been traveling like ourselves, separate from large parties, was made at Laramie, without attempting complete organization, to proceed together to the next ford of the Platte, perhaps, to South Pass.

Where so many were on the trail it was not an easy matter to gain the advantages of separate camps, which were desirable at times; to obtain this in the evening we turned away from the main traveled trail and returned to the river bank, traversing but a few miles. By this movement we found feed in abundance, as well as dry drift wood and dead willow brush enough for all purposes. A few alder trees gave variety to the general barrenness, and an occasional bunch of pink flowers growing close to the ground showed that nature was trying to make slight amends for uni-

versal delinquencies. Large patches of wild sunflower were also numerous, and flocks of birds were working among them gathering food and chattering like magpies.

The roads were hilly and rough, but hard on the surface; the heat was intense during the day, while the sun's rays were direct and piercing, but in the evening it became cool.

A heavy storm rushed off toward the south with a tremendous whirl, crossing the trail behind us, giving us a slight reminder of what other parties behind may have fully experienced. The cool wind which followed in its wake was enough to restrain the inquisitiveness of the omnipresent, torturing mosquito, and for that mitigation all were duly grateful.

Camp 34, July 15.—The road passed over today was both hilly and mountainous. The guide books say "mountainous," and so I repeat it, which has led us to suppose that some one must have passed this way so as to write it. For the most of the day it was up and down, steep and rocky. This portion of the road we were told by trappers and soldiers we met was the worst portion of the Black Hills.

These hills are not continuous or defined ranges, but broken up into all sorts of rough ridges and peaks, and the dark mantle which envelops them gives the name a proper significance. Stunted cedar, pine, hemlock and balsam grow in abundance along their rocky sides and in the hollows. In places it seemed astonishing how tree roots could gain a footing in the face of

granite walls where there appeared to be nothing whatever for even a lichen to live on.

Towards evening the road led down on to what seemed like a rolling prairie. From an elevated point of the hills this great expanse of valley was grandly beautiful, and in a land of cultivation would have surely been a haven of rest for benighted pilgrims. Ranges of hills, reaching away for miles to the north and east, overtopping each other like billows of the ocean, and the Platte coursing between, formed indeed a scene worthy a painter's brush. Tired tho the pilgrim may be, a landscape like that spread before them in these hills could not be other than inspiring.

To the south looming up softly above its mates, still carrying a portion of a snowy covering, is Laramie Peak. At the foot of the hills we struck sandy roads, heavy and hot.

During the noon rest, a storm of rain and hail came down upon us with sudden and tremendous force. It was not anticipated and came unannounced, and found the entire train unprepared. A skurrying to and fro for an active quarter of an hour on the part of everybody placed us in a comparatively secure condition, and then the storm came, with rain in copious quantities. The thunder and lightning accompaniments were up to the Black Hills standard, and seemed as tho they were disputing with nature and all things on earth for supremacy. Those rock-ribbed hills trembled with every crash of thunder, and the lightning seemed energetic enough to melt every rock into lava or burn them entirely to

cinder. This surpassing display of heavenly artillery continued for an hour. The animals got as near to a sheltering rock as possible, and turning around humped up their backs, hung their heads and quietly stood and took it. This storm rather outdid all previous efforts, while the hailstones, the size of a marble, were like pieces of broken ice, sharp and cutting.

This storm interfered with all traveling and camping arrangements, and it was near midnight before a suitable place could be found. Tired and weary as were man and beast, it was not long before camp became settled and quiet.

Camp 35, July 16.—The notes made of the roads for yesterday fits very closely all the conditions to-day. The weather was extremely hot and uncomfortable, and the sand blistering.

A twelve-mile drive in the afternoon over a parched and terrible plain without a drop of water to relieve a feverish thirst was a strain on everything and everybody. Wagons in the train began falling to pieces and tires to drop off. Lariats, straps and bits of wire had to be used to hold wagons together until water was reached. It was a trying period. This forbidding stretch seemed to be especially prepared for the favorite abode of rattlesnakes and scorpions, and enough of them were killed along the trail to satisfy the most energetic snake hunter. They were all in full health and vigor and well developed.

What our party would have done had we met any of the pre-historic fish, reptiles and monsters which formerly luxuriated in this afterward

wretchedly abandoned region, and grew to a size which seems incomprehensible, can only be conjectured. These vast plains and torrid sands have yielded to scientific research on geological lines the skeletons and bones of an extinct race of animals and reptiles of such wonderful dimensions that they confound the imagination. It is just as well, perhaps, that our journey was taken after these unearthly monsters had passed on. These pre-historic and scientific treasures are found in the portion of the territory which afterwards formed Wyoming.

Camp was located by the river from which muddy water was obtained. Wood sufficient was gathered, but the scarcity of verdure made it necessary to feed the mules every crumb of dry bread and bit of cracker to be spared, to eke out a scanty meal.

The camp was one general repair shop in the evening in the endeavor to make good the injuries accumulated during the day owing to intense heat and a long drive.

Camp 36, July 17.—The record as to roads continued much the same. A later start in the morning resulted in a short drive for the day. The weather was chilly all day, the direct opposite of the day before.

Every animal and every human being was beginning to show the fearful strain imposed by the mode of life and the hardships endured, and ill tempers were beginning to become prominent on all sides. It was hardly to be wondered at; everything was exasperating to an unbearable degree.

Human nature has its moods and tenses, and its limitations, too.

This disagreeable characteristic was not pleasing, and led to altercations too frequent to be passed over lightly. Traits of human disposition heretofore undeveloped and in some cases unsuspected were showing an ugly front, and were becoming the subject of thoughtful concern, not in our party but in companies we were associated with.

The road brought us down from the hills to the river again to camp. All along to-day the feed was entirely eaten off or dried up beyond any value. Where we camped it was evident that the mules had to be very diligent to gather a "square meal."

The low lands bordering on the river made roads bad and heavy to get over. Places were very swampy with deep holes worn in the soft mud by the multitude of wagons and animals going through. There was no escaping the locality, as the abrupt bluff shut off all passage way.

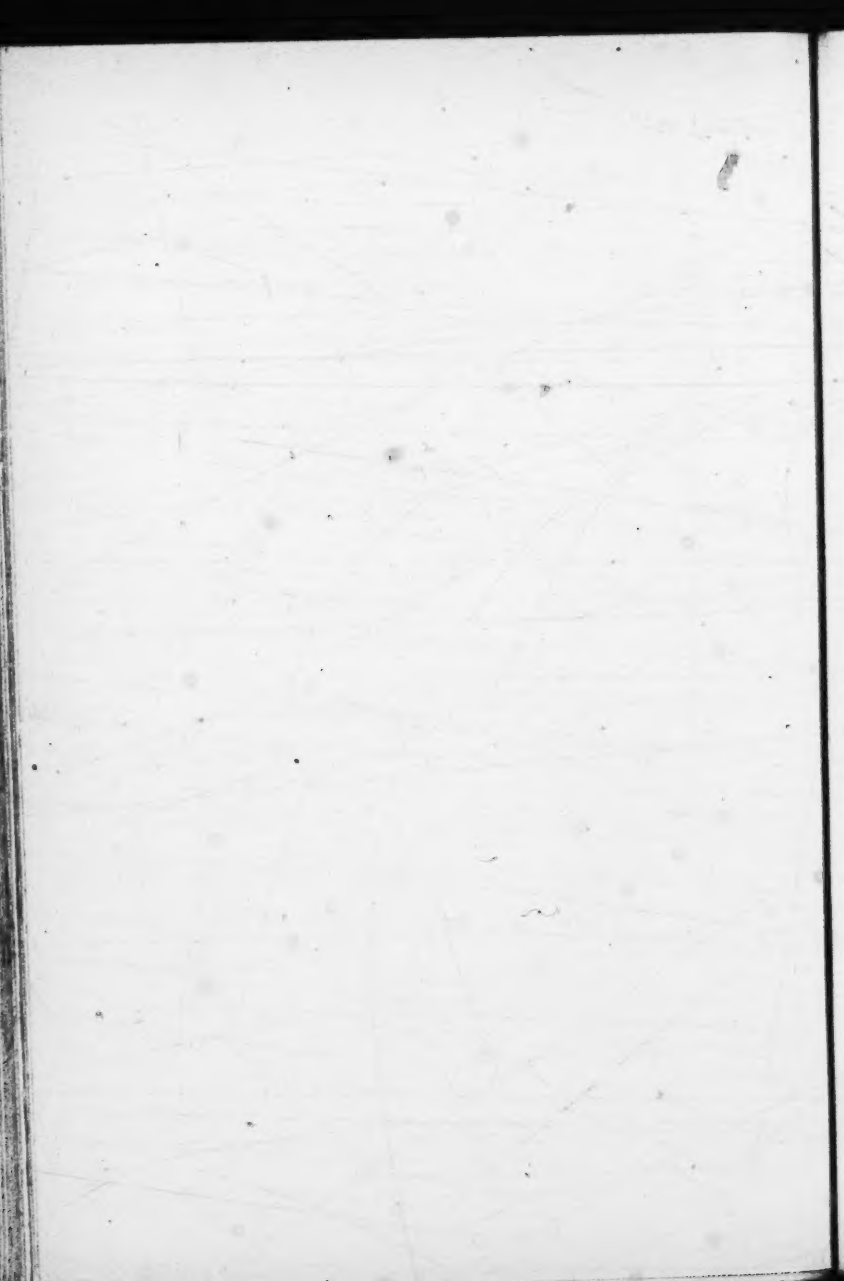
A drizzling and cold rain all the evening added to other company discomforts.

Camp 37, July 18.—Again our road was long and circuitous to avoid steep hills, deep hollows and muddy river flats. At the bottom of these holes there was invariably a brawling stream to cross, with deep and rocky slopes on both sides; they were always troublesome.

Some enterprising parties had established a ferry across the Platte at a favorable place; we passed one of them in the forenoon, and the man-



A WESTERN RIVER FERRY.



agers, with due regard to the prospective profits in the business, assured everybody that that was positively the last chance to get safely over the river if any one were desirous of traveling southwest. They also gravely assured all that no one thought now of going the old road beyond that point through South Pass. The little scheme worked well, and many crossed the river at two dollars and fifty cents a wagon. That ferry was better than a mine.

The river at this place was running comparatively clear, with a swift current, and presumably deep. The ferry was operated by a large rope or cable, being strung over the river supported by shears on either bank; a line was made fast to both ends of a flat-bottomed boat, which was about twenty feet long, the line secured to a concave pulley or sheave, which rolled along the cable; the current of the river propelled the boat in either direction, according to the adjustment of either bow or stern line. It was not a big concern nor difficult to operate, but it was an immensely profitable enterprise.

A little further along there was still another ferry of similar build; coincidentally the stories were the same with the additional private information that Indians were very bad along the trail we were contemplating traveling. Still a little further on there was a ford of the river perfectly safe, the water not deep enough to reach into the box of an ordinary wagon. So much for the truthful, honest ferrymen of the Platte.

Passed an immense ledge of iron ore of excellent quality, if appearances go for anything. The

"experts" in our party saw future wealth in these great beds of ore.

When camp was located it was found to be in a very indifferent location, but the best to be had without traveling late. One would hardly have an appreciation of good camp grounds were it not for so many inexpressibly bad ones.

Camp 38, July 19.—Debarred a choice of camp ground again, tho a very early start was made in hopes of finding such an one. It would be a difficult thing for words to describe what had been passed over for two or three days and what now surrounded the numerous camps, and have it understood by those who have not had an experience such as ours. It is a portion of the country utterly devoid of any redeeming features.

The trail was over marshy land on which grass grew in abundance, but by all means to be avoided, as it is so thoroughly saturated with alkali and the water so impregnated as to be poisonous to man and beast. A curse hung over the forbidding region.

Camped early in the best spot to be found, with poor grass and no wood. The labor of gathering greasewood for cooking the evening meal was something of an undertaking, especially when some members of the party considered their duty at an end when they had staked out their mules, combed their hair and washed their faces.

Two or three fair-sized rattlesnakes were "snaked" out of the vicinity where the tent was to be erected. Those dangerous fellows always find a warm place to coil up in to sleep, and are

not averse to a camper's blankets on occasion, as several this season have found, but fortunately without injury to themselves. Snakes are uncomfortable bed fellows; they are too cold.

Two men who managed the big wagon drawn by four mules had been in the habit for some weeks, when one of their animals showed indications of weakening, of taking it out of the harness and replacing it with a fresh one from the ones which were being held in reserve. When this discarded animal was sick, which sometimes happened, it was likely to be turned over to me to be cared for and doctored; I might do as I wished with it, so I got the mule into camp and braced him up fit to work again. That sort of thing got to be somewhat monotonous, too much so for real, hilarious enjoyment. I protested against wearing a mule down before exchanging, and got credit for being ill-natured and desiring to shirk my part of the duty.

It happened sometimes, as it did on the occasion of these notes being made, that I had a sick or worn down mule on my hands nearly all day; after attending to him and finally getting into camp near midnight, dragging along through a country infested with predatory Indians and white renegades and thieves, and finding no provisions made for supper, and an invitation within an hour to take my trick as guard, that I entered a blunt and positive demurrer; that settled it; I was surely a kicker. This little episode led to an open rupture with the managers of the four-mule team a few days later; they were members of the company, but had a superior kind of manner;

but it came my way in the end, and thereafter disabled mules received divided attention. Judge Hewitt being an old campaigner and well qualified, was unofficially regarded as a leader; as such he was not required to do guard duty, though he was promptly on hand for every occasion when anything was needed. But more of this further on.

If the face of nature in actual surroundings possessed one-half the attractive features in this forsaken place as a beautiful moonlight gave to the landscape, it would be a country to be ever remembered; even as it is, it will be long remembered.

The soda lakes in the Laramie plains were large sheets of what looked at a distance like smooth, white, glistening water. They were in reality almost pure soda. Halted several times to-day to examine them, and to study into their peculiar condition. The soda was clear and white, clean and suited fairly well for cooking purposes, tho some of the darker portions were nearly as strong as potash; it would certainly, we concluded, be invaluable in the glass-making industry. We gathered some of it, as did all the emigrant parties, for culinary purposes. The deposit was in places two or more feet deep, and contained very little other matter. Pools and springs of water appeared frequently near the road through this alkali district; it would be certain death to any domestic animal to drink it; there is no adequate antidote at hand among travelers to overcome its active poison. Carcasses of animals strewn along amply attest to the character of the spot. The land

around was exceedingly miry, and a disagreeable odor pervaded everything, not coming from animal carcasses, as they appeared to be preserved and dry, by being saturated with alkaline poison.

Oxen have a strange fascination for the carcass of a dead animal of their kind, out on the desert at least. The animals dying from the effects of drinking this highly poisonous water did not emit the offensive odors usual in other localities, but seemed to be partially embalmed. Loose oxen, when allowed near them, would gather around a carcass, smell it, snuff their noses, crack their horns together and become very excited. A good lashing with a heavy whip was the only thing that would drive them away, and allay any tendency to stampede or do each other violence.

A number of people had experienced serious trouble by drinking alkaline water not nearly so pronounced as this, and many had painful trouble with their eyes by the dust containing the same injurious element getting into them. This native soda, or potash very nearly, was afterwards gathered in large quantities, when the railroad was built, and shipped to a ready market in the states.

Clothing dipped into these springs and rinsed with pure water very soon afterwards was pretty well washed without much further effort.

An occasional mud hole or slough along this portion of the overland route was well filled with papers and public documents, many hundred weight having been dumped, presumably to lighten the load in the mail stage, as well as to fill chuck holes. In some places the documents

were still in the muddy tie sacks. The friends of some member of Congress were no doubt deeply disappointed at not receiving their regular supply of public documents.

As reading matter was conspicuously absent from all the passing caravans, many gathered up a public report to have something to read and ponder over. The reading matter was ponderous enough. Books were strewn along the trail for the next fifty miles.

Several hunting parties crossed our trail at different times recently, going from the hunting grounds among the "bad lands" at the north, to Denver and on into New Mexico. There were from ten to twelve men in each party, mostly Englishmen, all well armed and mounted, and having a dozen or more mules packed with stores and camp equipage. The number of men and the good firearms of the party no doubt had much to do in preventing an attack by a wandering band of Indians. These men reported that they had had "jolly sport, you know," in killing buffaloes, placing the number at near one thousand. They had been slain in pure wantonness, just for the "fun of the thing." It was a shameful business.

During the week we passed a number of places which had in years before been set aside by emigrants as burial grounds, and many hundred pilgrims who had fallen by the way had found a last resting place there. Some attempts had been made to secure the graves and mark them, but time, wolves and the sneaking coyotes had left little semblance of a burial plat. In some places human bones were on the surface of the ground.

One spot was pointed out to-day where more than a thousand had been buried, victims of the cholera scourge of 1852-3.

Among the many other hardships which fell to the lot of early emigrants in the severe trials of crossing the plains in 1852, cholera broke out and swept all along the line from the Missouri River to the western slope of the Rocky Mountains and the desert beyond. This was about the time that yellow fever and black tongue appeared in the lower Mississippi valley with terrible effect. Cholera baffled the skill and best efforts of all who had knowledge of diseases and remedies at hand; nothing could stay the ravages of the dread disease; it wore itself out in time. It has been stated that not less than ten thousand emigrants fell victims to the plague on the plains that year. Hard work, exposure and poor food provided ready subjects to the fearful scourge.

CHAPTER XIV.

Sunday a Day of "Rest"—Platte Bridge—The Sneaking Coyote—A Reminiscence of Home Life—The Sweetwater Valley and River—More Buffalo Paths and Wallows—Prevailing Wind Currents—The Wild Locust Getting Scarce—Distilling the Juice—Purchasing Another Mule—Paid for in Greenbacks—Great Walls of Rock—A Ham-strung Ox—Barren Country, Heavy Roads, Rattlesnakes—Leave the Platte Valley—Alkali Springs and Bitter Lakes—Rocky Cañon—Independence Rock—Ascending the Rock—Unfurling the Old Flag—The Devil's Gate—A Natural Curiosity.

CAMP 39, Sunday, July 20.—Moved out early with hopes of finding a good camp ground to enable the company to enjoy what came to be known in camp language as the "day of rest;" this day of "rest" consisted of letting the animals do the resting, the company doing the repairing, laundry work, cooking and baking.

It was nearly midnight before a camp ground was found where any sort of approach toward the necessary requirements was to be had; even then the grass was dry and hard, of a woody, fibrous character, which grew on a surface showing distinct spots of alkali. Wood was a scarce article, only to be found, after diligent search, in small billets along the river bank. As I had re-

signed my sinecure of swimmer in ordinary, there was no one to go out into or cross the streams to catch drift wood.

Camped near the end of Platte Bridge, a structure about a quarter of a mile in length, and quite durably constructed, which was erected over water comparatively shallow, to serve in place of a ferry. A good toll was charged for crossing, and it seemed to be well patronized. The timber of which it was built had been obtained in the Black Hills, a long distance away. The bridge and a few adobe huts in the south bank really gave something of a semi-civilized appearance to otherwise utter barrenness.

The telegraph crossed back to the north side of the Platte at this point, the line going to Salt Lake and San Francisco, California, on the old emigrant trail.

Covotes, the sneaking pest of the plains and all prairie regions, were a perpetual nuisance among the emigrant camps. They are inveterate thieves, and will often slip into a camp when all is quiet and grab provisions and make off without attracting attention. One or two of these filching cormorants can make noise equal to half a hundred other wild animals when they set up a howl, enough to rouse an Egyptian mummy.

Camp 40, July 21.—Remained in camp thirty-nine until noon and accomplished in that time a large amount of necessary work. This is no kind of a journey for laggards or those seeking ease; everyone is supposed to have a defined duty and must perform it. Water was "packed" up from

the river for all camp purposes, and firewood was hunted for far and wide.

Near our camp was an old deserted abode cabin in which were a fireplace and a few other conveniences not familiar in our camp. As a stiff, rather chilly breeze was blowing, filling the air with a distressing alkali dust, that cabin offered inducements, and possession was immediately taken and truly household operations commenced. With camp kettle hanging in the fireplace and the oven in front of a good fire, there was a reminiscence of forgotten home life at least. But this thing could not last; we had to take the road again.

The cabin had been the temporary abode of a party attached to a fur company located here for trading with the Indians. That occupation was now gone.

The trail in the afternoon was part of the time very sandy, with a number of sharp hills to surmount. Part of the way we traveled close to the river bank, where the rocky bluffs came near to the water; the river channel was deep and the current swift. The weather was cloudy and heavy, and along this river stretch the mosquitoes tormented the poor animals terribly; this condition did not improve much in the evening.

When we finally ascended a good elevation the prospect around was really and strikingly beautiful. The Platte turned away towards the south, and the Sweetwater River and valley were before us. This is a large branch of the Platte. Mountain ranges could be traced for infinite distances in every direction, with stately peaks rearing

their heads high up in the heavens. This point is six hundred and fifty-nine miles from Omaha; we have been thirty-four dismal days in covering the distance. Geographically, the great plains are five hundred miles wide and one thousand miles long. Geologically, it was the bed of a prehistoric ocean—perhaps. The earth nowhere contains greater desert wastes than the region just left.

We left the Platte behind, and turned into the Sweetwater Valley and followed the course of that stream. Little regret was expressed at bidding adieu to the Platte River; our experience along its course for almost seven hundred miles had not been such as to cause us an especial amount of pleasure, and we went our way, leaving the useless river for other trains to follow up and have the same recollection that we did.

The numerous buffalo paths through all this country were invariably north and south, the great droves going north in the spring to the vast pasturage grounds towards the American boundary, and even far up into the British possessions, returning to the south in winter for the good feed found in a more temperate climate during the inclement season. These paths were narrow tracks, in countless numbers, straight as the birds fly, on level ground, about one foot in width and six to ten inches deep; the soil had pulverized into dust, and much of it blown away by severe winds.

The hot and cold winds of the region east of the mountains seem to be controlled much as the buffalo, chiefly blowing hot and fierce from the

south in summer and from the boreal region at the north in winter. In whichever direction the winds blow the effect on vegetation and on all animal life is much the same, withering and devastating if from the south, fierce and benumbing if from the north. These wind currents in continuous succession will be felt from the Gulf of Mexico to Manitoba in summer, and from a more Arctic region to the Gulf in winter. There are no natural obstacles to break the currents or change their course, as this long sweep of country is open the whole distance.

Laramie Peak, away to the south, is still the chief sentinel over all the great desert plains and fertile valleys around it. The lofty Red Buttes at the north do the same duty on our side of the river.

The wild locust shrub, the gummy juice of which proved such a sovereign relief for the bite of mosquitoes and buffalo gnats—thanks again to the kindness of that old Pawnee Indian—appeared to be getting scarce, and fearing it might disappear entirely, I gathered a good bale of it and at the last camp improvised a sort of still out of two camp kettles and succeeded in making about one quart of a fair tincture to carry along for future use. There was not a distressing irritation resulting from insect bites or stings among our party while this invaluable shrub could be found, or the tincture lasted. The pity of it was there was no remedy for the poor animals, and they had to bear the constant stinging. At camping time the free use of bacon grease, for which purpose every drop was carefully saved, gave re-

lief to them, and then a greasewood smudge wherever possible continued until the cool morning air drove all the pests to cover. A mule's voice is not a high order of musical sound at any time; but on occasions like this it is deeply mournful and no one had the heart to complain.

As indications pointed, after a careful inspection of our stock, that one or two might give out entirely and have to be abandoned, the judge purchased another mule, a fine fellow, at Platte Bridge, of a Red River French trapper, paying therefor one hundred and twenty-five dollars in United States greenbacks. When the currency was first offered him the trapper looked bewildered, and then declined to accept the payment. Another trapper, an American, standing near, assured the man from Red River that the money was good, issued by the United States; and as he was in that country he had better take it; besides, having learned that the purchaser of the mule was Judge Hewitt, Chief Justice of Washington Territory, where the Frenchman sometimes trapped, he suggested he had better take the money. This suggestion was enough, and the Frenchman said: "Ah! ze money good; I take him!"

The American trapper winked hard with both eyes and lit his pipe.

Camp 41, July 22.—Camp was reached without special incident, after a drive estimated at sixteen miles. Road passably good, most of the way smooth and hard, and during the morning drive it led through a pass between two ledges of rock that appeared like two great stone walls in

an advanced state of decay. The seams and fissures were irregular, and it took but slight strain on the imagination to conjure up the idea that the walls had been placed there by design by human hands somewhere in antiquity. It was a narrow defile, and the surface rough from falling rock, which had crumbled off.

The Sweetwater River is about one hundred and fifty feet wide here, with a swift current, but shallow. The water is clear and cold, showing that the Platte gets a large portion of its mud and discoloration from affluents south of the mouth of the Sweetwater.

Passed a company of emigrants to-day who had been compelled to slaughter, and were dressing as we passed, an ox that had been ham-strung the night before by grey wolves; the wolves had been discovered before they could cut the throat of the disabled ox, and were frightened away by a shot or two. The owner turned the animal into beef, leaving the offal for the coyotes and wolves to quarrel over later. The grey wolf is a dangerous animal to encounter, and much injury has been reported from them among emigrant trains. The coyote is simply a sneak, but has his noisy intervals.

A slight rain in the afternoon cooled the atmosphere to an acceptable degree. Camp was located on Greasewood Creek, where the feed was luscious, and the mules were once more in high feather. It became necessary again to fit one's self around the clumps of greasewood and sage brush and kick away sand in order to secure a comfortable bed.

A wall of rock is not a bad brace behind one's back when the night air is chilly, tho a bed of sand and boulders would hardly be chosen in preference to a good mattress.

A saddle of antelope, obtained from a hunter and trapper, furnished a supper that would be hard to equal in any land; a king could get nothing more juicy and delicious.

Camp 42, July 23.—Our caravan was mobilized and started in good season this morning, animals and party refreshed and reinvigorated by the good things enjoyed at night. The road was on an elevated plateau until about noon, when it descended to a lower level and became extremely heavy from sand. This was a vast plain, and was as barren and forbidding as any we had yet found. The ever present greasewood and sagebrush, never showing a green leaf when alive and growing, only a dead ash color, were everywhere abundant; and the deadly rattlesnake showed his repulsive slimy scales as he slipped behind some sheltering rock or bush. A number of the dreaded vipers did their last crawling and rattling that day. Nothing can be imagined that will chill the marrow and paralyze the blood quicker and with more horrid sensations than to hear the warning, buzzing rattle of such a snake within a foot or two of you, unless it may be two of them, one on each side and but a few feet away. A shotgun or a stout stick with a shepherd's crook on one end is the safest thing to have along with you when passing through a preemption claim of his majesty, when his majesty is ready to receive.

On leaving this depressing place our train entered a defile of the Sweetwater Mountains, through which we passed to open plains beyond. A little to the west the river passed through a rocky gorge that was the first real curiosity we had met with, the first real intimation that we were nearing the Rocky Mountains in earnest. The walls of the cañon were from four hundred



INDEPENDENCE ROCK.

to five hundred feet high and perpendicular, composed of gray granite. Sand stone had about disappeared, and we were in a region where the enduring granite formed the chief material of the mountain ranges.

Halted for the noon rest by a bridge over the Sweetwater River near Independence Rock. This is a pile of rock, oval-shaped and quite regular,

about one-third of a mile in length, and perhaps one hundred and fifty yards wide; its elevation we estimated at about one hundred and seventy-five feet.

General John C. Fremont, in the account of his exploring expedition in 1845, gives the latitude of Rock Independence as forty-two degrees, twenty-nine minutes and a few seconds. It is a noted landmark to wayfarers on the overland trail. Hundreds of travelers etched their names on the top and on its granite sides, together with dates of visit, and while some names have been worn away, most of them remain as clear as when cut, as early as in 1840. The Sweetwater River flows at the base of the rock on the south. Many names were of men eminent in the world; every one was on a high eminence in this particular case.

This valley is broad, five miles or more in extreme width, undulating and picturesquely grand. On either side of the valley the mountains tower up to a great height, and their peaks are enveloped in clouds of a beautiful blue which form in wonderful shapes, shades and fleecy waves. The cloud effects among these mountain ranges are sometimes magnificent as one gets nearer the great divide.

The mountains appeared to be barren of timber, except in a few gorges and crevices where a hardy kind of pine was struggling against heavy odds in an endeavor to gain a foothold and maintain an existence. A few diminutive aspens near the river showed slight change in timber growth. The verdure was luxuriant and nutri-

tious, and a profusion of bright and rather pretty flowers was a gratifying relief to so much utter sterility everywhere abounding.

Some of our party ascended the highest point of Rock Independence, and in imitation of the original explorers unfurled the little Fourth of July flag to the breeze, and gave a three times three as a patriotic salutation, which was distinctly heard by those below, who responded in like manner. The people on the rock looked like mere pigmies, but the clear atmosphere carried the sound of voices like the tones of a bell. The rock is oblong, and is easily climbed. A ridge on the southerly side of the river is similar in formation, and evidently the river, assisted by some violent volcanic action or other upheaval of nature, cut its way through the ridge; but that was before restless emigrants began traveling over this road to California, or elsewhere on the Pacific coast.

Five miles further up the trail from Independence Rock is the Devil's Gate, a curious freak of nature. This gate is a cañon about one thousand feet in length, which the Sweetwater has cut through the point of a ridge of primeval, fine grained gray granite, as hard as any enduring granite could be, cutting its course at right angles. The ridges on both sides of this cut are just as they were when the earth was young. The walls of the pass are perpendicular, nearly four hundred feet high, the channel being over one hundred and twenty feet wide. The river is slow and sluggish, its flow much impeded by masses of rock which have fallen from the walls above. Some

grayish sandstone strata crop out here, which glisen with bright specks of mica. The gate is a great natural curiosity, and attracts attention



DEVIL'S GATE.

from all who pass that way. The name may be significant, as only a spirit of evil or some other irresistible agency must have held carnival when this gorge was bored through that granite pile.

The ranges to the north which this valley skirts are given the name of Rattlesnake Mountains. They have a gloomy aspect, dark and lowering. There is generally a meaning attached to the nomenclature adopted in giving names to localities or other defined places throughout this entire region; it is a true appellation here, at all events.

An incipient fire got started while supper was being prepared, that, had it not been promptly checked, might have caused trouble, and perhaps may have grown into a disastrous prairie fire. Care had been taken when the camp fire was lighted to clear away all dry grass or whatever would burn; but when the earth around the fire became hot there seemed to be something in the ground which carried the fire some distance away in several directions until it reached dry grass roots, when fanned by a good breeze it burst into flame and began running like a powder train and would soon have enveloped the entire camp ground. Fortunately a number of men were near by and saw the danger, and by the prompt use of sacks dipped in water and a handful of green willow brush it was quickly whipped out. It was a close call, but served as a warning for the future and kept everyone on their guard.

CHAPTER XV.

Trading on the Plains—A Profitable Business—Profit in Whiskey—Losing My Footwear—Blistering Sands—A Dismal Rain—High Cost of Boots—Antelopes—The First Murder Record—Discouraging Reports from Advanced Trains—Indians Show a "Civilized" Trait—Climbing a Lofty Peak—A Magnificent View—Grave of the Murderer—A Determined Administration of Justice—Pack Trains—An Uncanny Camp Ground—The Escort—"Ice Springs"—A Cold-Blooded Romance—An Early Start—Heavy Winds—A Mosquito Experience—Rough Trail—Stage Stations Abandoned.

CAMP 42, Continued.—Camp was made near the river, where feed was excellent, but wood was very scarce, being chiefly cedar drift wood, well water-soaked, and scant greasewood. The starlit evening was one of surpassing loveliness, and the air was pure and bracing; these modified disagreeable conditions very materially.

Traveling by easy stages, after leaving Fort Laramie, were several parties of plains traders, who made two trips annually from the Missouri River to South Pass and sometimes to the west of the divide, with large stocks of assorted goods to trade with Indians and trappers on the plains, and to supply trading posts in the mountains. They carried a large stock of assorted merchan-

dise suitable for the region and the requirements and tastes of those inhabiting it. The owners of the caravans hired young men for drivers who were desirous of getting into the mining country, and for small wages and their meals would drive until the stock of merchandise was sold out and the teams and wagons disposed of, and then get in with emigrants where best they could to complete the journey.

One man had a number of barrels of whiskey, two wagons loaded with that death dealing commodity, purchased cheaply before the war tax went into effect. "Indian whiskey," reputed to be a thoroughly vile concoction, sold for one dollar a glass, about fifty dollars a gallon at bar retail. This load was closed out at what appeared to be a startling figure, five hundred dollars a barrel, the trader immediately returning to a river point for another stock. This stuff was contraband in the Indian country, being forbidden by law, as Indians were sure to get it and then just as surely start a murderous foray. But the profit was so great that cupidity prompted traders to take all risks.

The profits in Indian goods and those for trappers were something enormous, also; for merely two hundred per cent. a dealer would not even halt his freight caravan to show his wares. A trader would reach a favorable place and make a camp, remaining one day or several, as the trade would justify, then pack up and move to another good post. Sugar, tobacco, coffee, powder, lead, flour and beans were in universal demand, as also rough clothing; canned goods were then un-

known. Trinkets for the Indians, in quantities almost beyond computation, were always included. One wagon I had occasion to know was loaded with boots and shoes; of this more anon.

Ordinary "kip" boots or "stogies" here on the Sweetwater, were valued at from eighteen dollars to twenty-two dollars, silver. One's footwear was an essential article in his personal belongings. I had provided myself with an excellent pair of boots before starting. To keep them in good order, after wading through sloughs and swamps, I usually greased them with harness oil in the evening. Last evening I had done this and placed the boots near the embers of a burnt out camp fire to keep them warm enough to dry out after a good soaking. During the night some watcher stirred up the embers, putting on wood enough to make a big fire, paying no attention to what was near it; next morning I found my boots roasted to a turn, the tops being drawn down over the toes, the whole a reddish brown; they were ruined irreparably, and I thought I was in a fix. I had a pair of hold-over dress boots that would have lasted in the rocks and blistering sand about one day.

The judge let me have a pair of his shoes until some other arrangement could be made. The difference in our pedal extremities made his shoes on my feet resemble the footwear affected by negro minstrels on the stage. How I obtained a pair comes in a few days later; I could not have purchased a pair of boots at this time had they been but one dollar for a dozen pairs.

Camp 43, July 24.—The surface of the trail on this day's journey was a fair average on some days past, generally dividing the distance about equally between the river and the foot hills. An occasional plain, with sand hot enough to cause blistered feet, or roast a mule's hoof, and alternating with stretches of rocky roads which were a severe strain on wagons, consumed a portion of the day.

Crossed the Sweetwater twice by fording. These crossings were easily accomplished, as the river bed was comparatively smooth and the water shallow. On the north side of the river the granite masses which form the mountains rise abruptly from the river bank to a high elevation, the cone or ridge terminating in innumerable summit peaks which might, without doing violence to the descriptions given by explorers who originally piloted expeditions over this country, be termed Saw Tooth Mountains. Farther away to the northward where higher ridges and peaks were visible, banks of snow glistened in the bright sunlight.

The weather in the morning passed from warm to very sultry, making everything sticky, gritty and uncomfortable. Soon after leaving the grounds of the noon camp, a storm arose, which, with squalls of west wind, brought with it a cold, dismal rain directly in our faces; there was no shelter to be had and no good camp ground for a long distance ahead; so we just tramped and shivered and shivered and tramped until near evening, when a camping spot where beautiful verdure existed was found. It was a romantic

spot where we halted, but we did not make camp until we had crossed the river again. An occasional isolated hill was like a sentinel, set to watch the valley. The peaks glistened gorgeously in the evening light of the setting sun. A chilly atmosphere made a demand for extra clothing. A beautiful picture could have been made from this standpoint, had not all the company artists been cheerfully occupied in gathering wood for a comforting camp fire. We were getting up into a high altitude and the night air was very bracing.

Several bands of antelope were seen skimming along over the ground before the storm commenced, but no one thought it worth while to waste a shot toward them. These graceful little gazelles are things of beauty, as they go like the wind when danger is scented. We could just think of these disappearing antelope steaks and lick our chops over the thought of the "chops" they were carrying away with them.

After the evening hunt for rattlesnakes was over, the party drew their mantles about them, and lay down to rest, perchance to dream of everything except camp life and toilsome hardships; as if dreams would relieve any of this.

A lonely grave by the roadside, guarded by a rocky promontory several hundred feet in height, told that some poor wayfarer was buried there. A paper tacked to a bit of board recited the fact that he had been murdered on the 6th of July by a man, who up to that time had been his traveling companion, in a fit of rage growing out of the exasperating conditions which seem to bring out all the ugly traits in man. Quarrels were fre-

quent, but they were generally settled by cool heads before becoming violent enough to result in homicide. This was the first serious affray we had any knowledge of. Very trivial things were easily magnified to such a degree that a violent quarrel was likely to ensue.

Information was passed down along the line by hunters, traders and scouts that some of the advanced trains were having troubles of a varied kind, including shortage of provisions, loss of cattle by exhaustion and Indian depredations, discouragements, broken down wagons, and, beyond all, dissensions among train companions and old time families and friends. This news was not pleasant to learn, and it was hoped, as most things in this region were on an exaggerated scale, that these stories were also greatly magnified.

A number of buck Indians came into camp under the usual pretence of wanting to "swap" and having "good hearts for white men" and the rest of that kind of entertainment. They made it known that an Indian village was located near a range of foothills to the north, not a great way off. The Indians had with them an assortment of wares they desired to trade with emigrants. But Indians are inveterate beggars all the same. This band of Indians belonged to some tribe a "heap mile" to the north, from the bad lands, and made it a practice, together with other wandering bands, of infesting the emigrant trail at the south to trade or pilfer as occasion offered. It appeared from information given by army scouts that trading in gewgaws was not their only occupation. The village contained many young squaws,



brought down for a nefarious traffic. It would appear that contact with the whites had exerted a baneful influence and that the habits of some civilized people did not differ much from the practices of our aboriginal inhabitants.

Camp 44, July 25.—Moved out of our last camp at an early hour in order to make a drive over a bad trail in the cool portion of the day, first crossing Bitter Cottonwood Creek. This trail led six miles away from the river over a barren and sterile plain, broad and level. Prickly pear, a member of the cactus family, always found seemingly where the soil was the most unproductive of anything needed in human economy, grew in numerous patches; a number of our traveling companions found some of it to a painful consciousness, the strong sharp thorns penetrating the soles of their shoes. The wound made by one of the thorns is distressing.

At the end of this drive, accomplished without mishap, the regular road passed along the head of a cañon which had been broken down through the granite mountains to let the river have an outlet. Ordinarily this road through the cañon was barely passable, but the early floods had so washed and torn it up that it was no longer practicable for pack trains, not to think of loaded wagons. To make this portage, the early pilgrims of the season had found a trail with infinite trouble, over the spurs and foothills, through deep sand and sharp rocks so as to pass around the mountain and regain the main road.

While the great cavalcade of wagons was la-

boriously making the detour over a rough and rocky series of sharp ridges, I took occasion to climb one of the loftiest peaks for a better observation. The rocky and broken side of the mountain was steep and exceedingly difficult to scale, but I gained the top by some expenditure of energy. From that elevated point a wonderful landscape view was unfolded that would have more than compensated for an hundred fold greater exertion to gain the opportunity. The panorama was diversified by mountains and plains reaching leagues away beyond the possibility of estimating distances with the eye alone, while many miles of the river in its winding, snake-like course could readily be traced. The snow-capped peaks of the Wind River range were plainly delineated, the numberless peaks rising in their majesty about ten thousand feet, glittering with eternal snow, a sublimely beautiful spectacle. The clearness of the atmosphere was such that the extent of vision was practically unlimited. The general appearance of the range, not considering the peaks, from my great elevation was low and gloomy; geographically, they were from fifty to seventy miles away. The wagon trains on the plains below were no larger than creeping insects.

After becoming satisfied with the picture, I commenced the descent. This was even more difficult than the ascent, as I had frequently to lower myself from crag to crag along the terribly broken ridge, sometimes suspended over a deep gulf, creeping along the edge of it by the hands alone; I got off easily, only acquiring a few scratches and bruises. I tried to attract the

attention of some one in the train by shouting, and finally succeeded, when it was concluded I was in trouble and the judge rode the saddle mule out near the range to investigate; he was a little disgusted when he found his error and rode back to the train; it was a thoughtless act on my part, but I only sought to reveal my identity and location.

As no names were engraved on the top of that ridge, I presumed that human feet seldom trod the elevated spot and the human voice seldom disturbed its lonely solitude. I regained the party in due time, pretty well tired out, but well pleased with the exercise and the wonderful picture presented to view. I count that little side trip as one of my most satisfactory memories and experiences of the whole journey.

It was necessary to ford the river several times to-day; it was quite wide, but not deep enough to cause annoyance; the water was cold, soft and clear.

Soon after noon we passed another new made grave; it was the tomb of the murderer mentioned yesterday. A paper tacked to a head board detailed the story of his pursuit, capture, trial and death by shooting. He had been followed by men of his party, caught, a trial jury summoned from among other emigrant trains, and his guilt being established, his condemnation and death followed promptly. Retribution was summary. Men on the plains had a crude but speedy way of administering justice to thieves and murderers, and they did it with no feeling against the culprit, but with a stern determination

to rid emigrant caravans of men whose vicious natures so far developed as to murder their fellow travelers under any provocation. This murderer, after being condemned, was blindfolded and led to the grave prepared for him, and shot by a squad of his fellow pilgrims. He was buried with little formality and without a coffin.

Some men let their evil dispositions control them under excitement, while other men never forget their manhood and civilities due to neighbors wherever dispersed around the globe. A trip like this overland journey will come nearer bringing out the good and bad instincts of human beings than anything else which can be named. Even the friction of the atmosphere has its influence in the evil development; deprivation, discouragements and exhausting toil will do the rest.

Several pack trains passed this afternoon, loaded with immense quantities of merchandise for distant trading posts. The animals were evidently loaded with "all the traffic would bear," and were urged on by the frequent application of a cutting lash and yell, "gup, moolah!"—meaning, I supposed, "go along, you mules!" A mule in a pack train is shown scant mercy.

Camp was located on low, wet, swampy piece of ground, and from everywhere about it came a decided odor, so disagreeable that it was almost sickening; to increase the general discomfort, the added exhalations from numerous decaying carcasses loaded the air. The water was bad, had a sulphury taste, savoring of overripe eggs. It was a dirty, sandy, pestilential hole, the most miserable location we had so far gotten into. The buzzards

hovering around the decaying carcasses did not add much beauty or attraction to the offensive scene.

About a mile away on good feeding ground was the military emigrant escort, its animals swarming over the plains. This escort had so far succeeded in just about denuding the country of what little feed there was, and was always sure to locate and occupy the best spots.

This delectable spot is named "Ice Spring" by the guide books. It was said ice could be found by digging down about two feet. All traces of ice, if there had ever been any in the summer season, had disappeared before we got there. That ice story was a cold-blooded romance, put into guide books to deceive.

No one about the camp felt like taking interest in anything but getting to sleep and so for a brief time forgetting our discouraging situation.

Camp 45, July 26.—Started from camp this morning at sharp four o'clock, without attempting to get breakfast; the mules fared no better; we all were glad to leave the uncanny surroundings and stench of Ice Spring behind. Pushed forward ten miles, skirting several alkaline lakes on the road, which were carefully avoided, as death lurked in the poisoned waters.

The road led through a series of low sand hills and ridges to the summit of a higher ridge, from which there was a sharp descent to the river; the river was easily forded, and as a fair amount of grass appeared a halt was called to graze and combine breakfast and dinner in one. From this

point we followed a direct westerly course for a few miles until toward evening, when it was necessary to cross a high bluff, which was ragged and rough to a degree that seriously threatened the continued existence of wagon wheels. The peaks and crags of the mountains reared their heads heavenward from three to five hundred feet above the bluff we were traveling. Our trail was a crooked one, its serpentine courses swinging repeatedly to every point of the compass within an hour's drive. Along this rough and condemned place a high wind prevailed loaded with sharp, gritty particles of dust and sand, which was very distressing. Those of the party fortunate enough to possess goggles counted themselves lucky mortals.

The wind continued until we reached the valley along the river when it culminated in a light, drizzly rain. The road was through a growth of willow bushes which bent down low by reason of the moisture on them, hanging over the road. The mosquito of the plains had taken refuge here during the time it was raining and the wind blowing, and trains passing among the bushes brushed them off in clouds. They seemed to be more ravenous than their relatives before encountered in the low lands. They settled on the poor mules in such numbers that it was necessary for some one to walk along side of them and brush the blood-suckers off. The animals acted bravely under the exasperating circumstances, and we managed to get through the brushy locality without accident. Our individual troubles were to come. The mosquito invasion continuing, camp was

made as quickly as possible. Located on a rise of ground in a greasewood and sagebrush plain; the resinous quality of these shrubs make a quick, hot fire, tho requiring constant feeding to keep even heat.

An attempt to eat supper in the tent by candle light was a dismal failure on account of the mosquitoes. They were so numerous that one could not eat, hardly dare breathe; they would get into one's mouth, nose, eyes and ears, driving one distracted, and their biting was terrible. The vigor of acid vinegar had no effect and fumigating with burning brown sugar and camphor only drove the swarm to the upper part of the tent, scotched, but not killed. The whole inside of the tent was thickly covered and black with the buzzing pest. Fortunately the wind sprang up again and a scheme was instantly decided upon. All hands went to work like a trained circus tent crew, loosened every cord and lashing and at the word turned the tent inside out, leaving the mosquitoes out in the cold world. Then, by renewing the fumes mentioned, and starting a heavy smudge in the doorway of the tent to the windward, we succeeded in expelling the vermin, and fared well for the night. The hungry animals refused to eat the bunch-grass if it was outside the heavy smoke, but stood half the night with their heads in the smudge with water streaming from their eyes; ears unfurled and flopping with every movement of the head. Toward morning the cold air drove the mosquitoes down, and the animals were released from their enforced fasting.

General Isaac I. Stevens on his railroad exploring expedition at the headwaters of the Missouri River in 1853, detailed experiences of a similar nature with myriads of mosquitoes.

Camp was located between two ranges of rocky hills that must have had a tremendous upheaval at some, perhaps the tertiary, period, for the boulders were thrown together in wonderful confusion. We called the place Rocky Ridge. Near this spot, in the early part of the season, a mail stage and telegraph station was raided and broken up by Indians, the men of the station murdered and the stock run off; the station had not been re-established. A number of the stations of the overland mail stage line had been abandoned in consequence of Indian depredations, the station keepers either being killed or escaping. In any event they did not return.

Several large emigrant trains came up in the evening, and camped in our neighborhood, making a very considerable showing in the number of wagons and tent houses. All were required to drive their animals over the river, as had been done on former occasions, to secure forage; the guards were obliged to remain with them all night, cold and wet from the fording.

The question of remaining at this camp over Sunday was undecided; no matter the hour or the labor involved in reaching a camping ground, the appearance of daylight rendered it necessary that every one be astir to take his or her part in the coming day's work. Making the distance required was the first requirement, rest was purely incidental.

CHAPTER XVI.

Another Daylight Move—A Benumbing Sand Storm—“Beautiful Snow”—A Day in Camp—Skirmishing for Wood—A Military Camp—Writing Letters Home—My Gun Trade—Beautiful Rainbows—Rumored Indian Aggressions—Roads Diverge—“Lander’s Cut Off”—Fremont’s Peak—Getting Away from the Escort—Prospecting for Gold—“I Smell Buckskin”—Mormon War of Invasion—A National Humiliation—A Warning to Thieves and Murderers—Great Suffering Reported.

CAMP 46, July 27.—At the first appearance of daylight, the camp was aroused; it was decided to move forward to secure better accommodations; there was no second choice in the matter; it was unavoidable. Breakfast was not an elaborate affair, and everything was hurried through with dispatch, and the monotonous march began. Every train camped near us had the same view of matters, it seemed, and at an early hour the long caravan began to wind along the dreary road.

The first halt was made at Strawberry Creek, a ten-mile drive, and a hard one. The creek was narrow and shallow, being one of the headwater streams forming the Sweetwater River. The first three or four miles were a succession of hills with steep ascent and descent, and hollows which had scant level surface before another ascent be-

gan. Some of the gullies contained good running water. A good spring supplied all the cold water required, delicious and satisfying.

During the afternoon a severe gale of wind sprung up which impeded locomotion very much. The intensity of the sand storm stirred up by the wind swirled and penetrated everywhere. A cold pelting rain set in later, and then the full measure of discomfort seemed assured. While this cold, benumbing storm was going on we reached a branch of the river, and fording was necessary. The river channel was washed out between two ranges of ragged hills, and they looked gloomy enough in our forlorn situation. The atmospheric conditions at night were a sufficient warning that we were nearing the snow line; in fact, the snow-capped ranges had been in sight almost constantly for some days past. These hillsides were nearly covered by immense banks of snow, deep enough to be eternal, the first we had reached. I climbed up and carved out a piece, and took it into camp as a midsummer curiosity. Several of the party nibbled at the "beautiful snow" merely as a reminder in future on the recurrence of July 27th.

Two miles from these snow banks and the river ford, we came to Willow Creek, coursing through a very pretty little valley. We turned from the regular traveled road and followed up this valley a mile or more and were rewarded by finding a large area of fine pasturage. Then we camped.

July 28.—There being an abundance of luscious, soft grass for the animals—and the poor

fellows being sadly in need of it and of a day's rest—it was decided not to move to-day, but to remain where we were. A number of other trains resolved to do the same thing. The fuel question was solved by several members of the party skirmishing among the rocks and crags for dead brush and scrubby pines, which was the character of timber growth near us. Up the mountain sides, difficult to obtain, large pines and hemlocks grew, but we made out quite well with what small fagots we gathered.

During the afternoon, it became known that a part of the company's camped here would separate from us on the morrow, many taking the trail to Salt Lake City, and that all who wished to write letters to loved ones at home could do so, and they would be taken to Salt Lake and mailed. That was enough to send a thrill of delight through the most phlegmatic. There was a ransacking for writing materials, and soon the camp was like a big writing school acting under the inspiration of communicating with friends long separated and far away, with a story which would make a volume of harassing trials and dangers, filling the intermediate time.

Postage was ten cents per half ounce or fraction thereof, and the hunt for postage stamps resembled market day at a country fair. That was to a certainty our busy day. Letters for the East and home went by regular mail conveyance from Salt Lake City to San Francisco, thence by ocean via the Isthmus to New York. It was a long distance and consumed forty days' time from Salt Lake; sixty from the point at which they were

written. There was no means of sending messages back over the route by which we came, as no one was going back; every face was turned to the west.

A young man connected with a trading outfit, acting as a driver, who from the first formed a high estimation of my rifle, at the time I shot the prairie dog early on the journey, did not at any time cease his negotiations to become possessed of the gun, offering me various inducements to trade pieces. Every western town forty years ago had a gunsmith who could make a complete rifle, and it would be a superior "hand-made" weapon; mine had been made by such an artisan at Tecumseh, Michigan, and many of my fellow travelers had pronounced it perfect in aim and fire, testing the arm to their satisfaction. This young man had a gun which was made in Germany, of good workmanship, silver mounted, of large bore, much lighter than mine, but not so useful. He started to talk "swap"—Indian style—even, but finally offering five dollars difference, but his offers did not meet my estimate of values and were declined. The young man's employer had determined on taking the trail leading southward, freighting his merchandise further into the interior or to the mines.

This young gentleman wanted that gun, and as a final inducement he offered his rifle, five dollars in money, and a pair of boots; that caught me; I selected a pair of stout "kip" boots, selling for twenty-two dollars, as before noted, and the trade was complete. By this time my borrowed shoes were nearly worn out, and my feet were

barely kept from the burning sand, and those boots were my one great need; I was satisfied with the trade and correspondingly happy. My new gun I concluded would probably kill as many Indians as the old one, at any rate it would serve just as well as a scare. As the principal part of my time during the day was occupied in walking, durable footwear was an essential thing.

Camp 47, July 29.—Struck camp at a reasonable hour, after a substantial breakfast. Two miles from last camp came to the river again. At this point, there was stationed a company of seventy soldiers, detailed from the cavalry arm of the U. S. Army, to guard this section of the mountain trail, it being deemed important that the emigration should be protected from the encroachments of Indians in the mountain passes. The officers corroborated some of the rumors we had heard concerning the Indian troubles, and urged all companies to travel and camp near together from here on; there might not be trouble for us, but they repeated again that in union there is strength, and it would be better to be strong enough to deter Indians from attempting a raid than to be required to fight them in defense, with the chances involved.

The Indians, we were assured, had all been informed that the "Great Father" had a great deal of trouble on his hands and could not chastise them should they determine to take the war path; and that there was much discontent among all the plains and mountain tribes of Indians, and that many of the "braves" were on the war

path warring with each other, all making common cause against the whites. Cavalry scouts, only a few days before, had a brush with a band of Sioux not far from our present camp, and they had killed two, besides several ponies, and run the whole of the band back into the mountain fastnesses.

The Indians were fully as well, if not better armed than the whites; were better mounted on hardy ponies, and had the advantage of knowing every inch of the plains, valleys and mountains. This information was not soothing to nervous people. A number of Sioux had been loitering around our camp for several days, as well as around the camps of our neighbors. Some of them were friendly in a way, but always on the lookout for something portable; others were sullen, morose and scowling; they were all distrusted and watched closely. It was considered best to keep them all at a distance, as they were no doubt spies for their tribes, estimating their chances for stampeding the stock of the emigrants and robbing, perhaps murdering, the emigrants as well.

Our company was not made up of rash school boys on a lark, neither was it made up of men afraid of their shadows. This information, however, served to make all guarded and careful of the stock when grazing. A double guard was set every night.

The cavalry were encamped where the roads diverge; these roads were leading off in different directions, but both eventually bringing up at the same point. One was familiarly known as



WIND RIVER MOUNTAINS AND FREMONT'S PEAK.

8.

"Lander's cut-off," the most direct and best route to Fort Hall; another was called "Sublett's cut-off," while still another was the old emigrant trail to Oregon, rough and mountainous and difficult to travel, with still another branch south to Fort Bridger and Salt Lake. Our party took the Lander cut-off without hesitation. We moved to the right, or northwest, and in doing so parted company with many who had been our traveling companions over many leagues of inhospitable desert: as to our party, we were going into a strange and unknown country; we had neither guide nor chart of it; we only knew we were still going towards the setting sun.

It was all kinds of a road we passed over, plains and hills, level and sandy, steep and rough. Some sloughs made bad fording. Crossed some immense beds of quartz rock and gray granite. Huge piles of boulders reared their heads all around the plateau, giving the vista a picturesque appearance. Snow peaks in the distance pointed upwards into Heaven's blue dome thousands of feet, planted by the sides of Rocky Mountain glaciers, and covered with eternal snow, in existence, perhaps, since the dawn of creation.

Away to the north stands Fremont's Peak—named for the great explorer and pathfinder—its tops cleaving empyrean blue at fifteen thousand five hundred and seventy feet elevation. This is a notable mountain, and can be seen for hundreds of miles as it towers over everything in the midst of great mountains of the Wind River range. Other peaks of lesser magnitude are seen at all

points, doing their best to divide attention given to the greater peak.

Two things prompted the judge to start his train on the cut-off spoken of; one being the desire to get away from the over-shadowing presence of the military "escort," so called; the only apparent purpose of its existence being to give some contractor big profits in freighting army supplies from the Missouri River. The immense herd of animals connected with it swarmed over the whole country and ate off everything that grew, fit for forage, and its numerous camp fires, where wood was scarce, consumed everything for miles around that would burn. The other reason being that the judge had reliable assurance that a more northern route meant good grass and abundance of water and wood—two things of absolute necessity. There was also the general belief that the government wagon road to the north was open and good, and in a great degree safe from Indian attacks.

At the noon halt several of the party prospected for gold along the river where indications seemed favorable, but found only mica. The place where the train stopped was eligibly situated for viewing almost everything lying out doors. One old fellow, one of a neighboring train, who had a load of Indian goods, stood around awhile, smoking his pipe after dinner, when all at once he called out, "By gad, I smell buckskin"—meaning Indians—and under his wagon he went headlong, behind a wagon seat, supposing himself, like the ostrich, secure when his head was hidden; there was no buckskin other than moccasins within

miles of us. There had not been a hostile or other Indian around or in sight of our camps, so far as known, for three days.

It was along the route we had been traveling for a number of days that the United States Army marched in the winter of 1857-8, but little more than four years before, from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, when that wild and incomprehensible "war" was undertaken against the Mormons, in Utah, under President Buchanan's administration. No reasonable explanation has ever been given for the War Department orders directing the sending of troops to Utah Territory in the dead of a Rocky Mountain winter. Why they went, and what they were there for, no army officer in command ever knew, or if he knew was not privileged to tell. No army was better equipped with supply trains and every character of military supplies than was that "Army of Occupation in Utah;" yet the recital of the story of the sufferings of that little army through the mountain district of which so vast a portion was in view between Devil's Gate and South Pass, reads like the retreat of Napoleon from Moscow, only in a lesser degree. The thermometer at times went forty-four degrees below zero, and many times stood at twenty-five, through that winter.

The hardships and deprivations of the troops during that winter campaign were terrible, and much of their stock was frozen to death. Provisions became scarce, and salt cost five dollars a pound, and could only be purchased from the Indians. The Mormons, sometimes masquerading as Indians, not only stole the beef cattle driven in

for the troops, and robbed or destroyed the supply trains, but entered into contracts with the commander of the military forces, and sold the stolen provisions back to him at an enormous cost. It was a profitable "war"—for the Mormons.

The Mormon legions stole about everything the army possessed, and if history is not belied scarcely a United States musket was ever taken back out of the territory. It was a humiliating and wretched blunder, undertaken and conducted at fearful cost, in blood and treasure, ending as it began, in humiliation and disgrace.

Notices posted at several prominent places along the trail warned thieves and murderers to be circumspect in their conduct, else the mailed hand in the way of frontier justice would be laid upon them with severity. This also applied to outlaws generally; this class appeared to be too numerous to be tolerated easily. Frontier justice was exactly what outlaws did not want, and had good reason to dread.

The rumors which had passed through the camps, transmitted by wandering trappers and plainsmen, regarding the troubles ahead among emigrant parties, because of exhausted stocks of provisions and other disasters of a serious nature, added to sickness, were beginning to be out of the domain of rumor, and were assuming the form of actual facts. That some parties were near to the end of their supplies was very evident, judging from what we had been made aware of at the start, and much suffering was sure to occur if relief was not extended.

A lunar rainbow was an entirely new atmos-

pheric phenomenon to our party. After an evening rain ceased it turned quite warm, and the moon came out brightly. To the westward there appeared a surprisingly lovely "bow of promise," about nine o'clock in the evening; not so bright as if by day, but beautiful in all the colors usual when reflecting the rays of the sun, but softer and more subdued. The arch completely spanned the limited plain over which it hung; it was perfect in form and bewitchingly attractive. It lasted about fifteen minutes when another little rain flurry obscured the moon, blotting out our lunar picture. Unlike the rainbows occurring in the day time there was no second arch shown, or if there were it was too dim to be traced by the eye. There was a peculiar condition to the atmosphere during the continuance of the bow, as tho having the effects given by a subdued midnight halo of an aurora borealis. Altogether it was a pleasing ethereal scene, recurring afterwards on two or three occasions, but not so clearly reflected.

CHAPTER XVII.

South Pass—Crossing the Rocky Mountain Divide—South Pass Really the North Pass—Lunching on the Back Bone of the Continent—Water Flows East and West—A Grand View—Down the Western Slope—Altitude, Distance and Time—Turning Cold with Piercing Winds—Green River Plains—An Unseasonable Breakfast—Ferrying and Swimming Green River—An Improvised Ferry—Friendly Indians—Changeable Weather—Camp in a Swamp—Water Rapidly Rising—Sunday Road Building—An Incipient Disturbance—Supplying Fresh Beef.

CAMP 48, July 30.—Camp was astir this morning at an early hour, every one feeling the impulse suggested by realizing that soon we reach the summit of the Rocky Mountains and cross the divide which separates the two parts of the continent, the east from the west. Every neighboring camp appeared to be actuated by the same exhilarating thought and commenced early preparations for surmounting the continental backbone in good season. The morning was bright and beautiful, the air bracing and satisfying. The trail had been gaining elevation so gradually that apart from the rarified atmosphere and the low temperature between midnight and day dawn, the fact that we were at a high altitude would hardly

have been perceptible. The grade was easy but steadily upward, as indicated by the swiftly running rivers and smaller water courses which the trail followed from the Missouri River to the summit.

At 12:30 o'clock we reached the summit and halted for lunch. There was nothing particularly different in general surroundings which would distinguish it from half a hundred other divides our road had surmounted, crossing sharp ranges and spurs. The road was comparatively good, and for most of the way the view in every direction was unobstructed, the line of vision extending for many miles. The Rockies could be traced away off into the dim distance until they appeared the merest foothill ridge, generally trending north and south. The picture presented could hardly be described. The towering crown of Fremont's Peak rose up out of the great range, piercing the sky through the clouds, almost three miles above the sea level, "grand, gloomy and peculiar," while other peaks seemed to be reaching up to dispute its supremacy or at least claim a full share of admiration. Everywhere the snowy mantle on every peak glistened in the bright sunlight, assuming prismatic colors, according to the position of the peaks, relative to the sun's rays, a never-ending reflection from eternal ice and snow.

The road on the eastern slope led along for some distance on the side of a deep cut in the granite ribs of the mountains, through which a stream of water coursed ultimately to mingle with the waters of the Gulf of Mexico. The creek was down about twenty-five feet, within perpen-

dicular walls, and no place was found where water could be obtained from it, or a human being get to the bed of it.

For a long distance the wagons rolled along what seemed to be a vaulted stone roof over a great cavern. The sound was as tho the mountain was hollow and the noise of the wagons echoed and reverberated precisely as they would if passing over an enormous cave.

The road passed between drifts of snow which were melting and trickling along down in both directions, and within a few feet a dividing line could be seen, on one side to add to the flow of the system of rivers to the Gulf of Mexico, on the other to find its way to the Rio Colorado, thence to the Gulf of California, or was lost in the sands at the bottom of the mountains. Our party was perfectly content to let "the beautiful snow" dissolve, and without hindrance seek its courses, one to the rising, the other to the setting sun. The sun's rays were very direct on the top of the mountains on the day we were there, and the snowy canopy was no doubt greatly reduced before the next winter's fall began.

What appears a little strange to the lay mind is that South Pass is the most northerly passage over the mountains on the route taken by emigrants across the continent, while what answers as North Pass is away to the southward. No one pretends to explain this shifting of names and localities.

We had left the granite barricade which walls in the Sweetwater River and climbed to an elevated plain which constitutes the pass, and is

eighteen or twenty miles in width. It was not a level plateau nor yet rough; there were numerous tracks over it, and it was not difficult to drive on any one of a dozen trails. The great number of emigrant wagons which had gone over the pass in former years had worn a smooth roadway and made wheeling comparatively easy. The appearance of the mountain top was somewhat like swells on the ocean, not waves lashed into fury. Peaks at a distance towered up skyward to a great height, scattered in all directions. The road was circuitous, but easy of ascent. It passed near the foot of Table Mountain, a seemingly round rock of great circumference, flat crown, standing isolated and prominent at the extreme southern limit of the Pass, as if guarding the western portal.

The view from every point one might select while passing over this remarkable depression in a tremendous mountain range was grand; so grandly expansive that one naturally felt the utter insignificance of lesser things even among these wonderful works of nature. But the average emigrant has no time for sentiment or to feel impressed with beautiful scenery, but plods on, on down the western flank through the great natural gateway into the desert plains and valleys of the Pacific slope along waterways which soon carried their volumes to the Columbia—the Oregon of early discoveries.

From the confluence of the Platte with the Missouri River, a little south of Omaha, the summit of the divide is distant eight hundred and eighty-two miles; by the barometer the elevation is

seven thousand four hundred and ninety feet above tide water of the Gulf of Mexico.

From this lofty eminence we gazed on the mountain ranges and peaks of Western Washington Territory, which afterwards were included in Wyoming, and passed unregretfully from the western confines of Nebraska. To the south is the richly colored serrated ridge of the Wahsatch Mountains, which walled in the Territory of Utah.

We had now been out three months from the original starting point, and for forty-seven days of the time had plodded continuously across the "Great American Desert" of our school day atlases, along the route designated long ago as the "Great Emigrant Trail." Since crossing the Mississippi River all this journeying had been over that portion of the Continent included in the Louisiana Purchase, something over twelve hundred miles. As we turn from this vast expanse, bounded at this point only by an imaginary line, we gazed down on another area of immense proportions, acquired by the Florida Treaty in 1819. The former had been an American possession but sixty-nine years, the latter but forty-three. The statesmanship which secured these additions to the United States is worthy of more praise than has yet been bestowed on it.

We estimated, on a survey of the best map available, that, by the indefinite route selected leading from the South Pass there were before us two thousand miles still to be traversed. It turned out that the distance was much greater;

the time consumed was three months of unceasing toil and hardship.

On the descent of the western slope the weather was cold and the wind raw and piercing, sweeping over the great Rocky Mountain glaciers and vast fields of snow, and to one obliged to sit in the driver's seat to guide the animals and control the vehicle it was almost benumbing; those who walked were the only ones who enjoyed any degree of comfort. The road in its down grade was long and winding, sometimes surmounting, at other times passing around, steep ridges. Occasional glimpses were had of a desert down below us to which the trail leads. Near the foot of the slope we crossed two very rapid mountain torrents, one by bridge, the other by fording over a bed impeded by large boulders. These streams were the Little Sandy and the Big Sandy. We camped by the latter just as darkness began to gather, at an altitude of seven thousand and eighty-five feet; the atmosphere was cold, but slightly modified by the wind ceasing. The Dry Sandy carried some water, but it seemed to be a sandy mountain wash made so by flood water.

A rousing camp fire, a snug tent and warm blankets all combined to render the night not entirely comfortless. The desert beyond, partially revealed from the mountains, is the Green River Valley or plains.

We had crossed the great divide.

The noise of the mad torrent, by a bank of which our camp was located, combined with that of cataracts up the stream, we cared not where,

made a music of an unfamiliar strain, but lulled the camp to quietness very soon after supper.

Camp 49, July 31.—Supposing ourselves, and rightly, as it appeared, to have camped on the border of a wide and expansive desert, camp was roused at an unseasonable hour for breakfast in a cold and bitter atmosphere, to make the accustomed preparations for moving on with a hope of clearing the desert portion before dark. That particular reach of Green River desert was "all our fancy pictured it," and very much more beside; it was desolation complete.

At noon, having driven eight continuous hours, and found a spot where grass abounded, and a nice stream of water, a halt was called. A goodly number of a tired company snatched a brief half hour for much needed sleep.

The afternoon drive was long and wearying over a comparatively level plain on which the sagebrush grew so thick that it impeded progress. A narrow road had to be trodden out through the tangled brush by the trains that had passed over it. At a seasonable hour we reached the east fork of Green River, a wide, deep and rapid stream, and as cold as the glacial regions around its sources. Here we found many large trains encamped, waiting to effect a crossing. Some of these trains had been there several days. It was a good recruiting ground, as grass and wood were found in abundance. The numerous camps resembled a great army.

As the river could not be forded, a temporary ferry had been established, and all possible expe-

dition was being used to urge a speedy crossing. The ferry was a boat only large enough to take two or three ordinary wagons at a time, and made the crossing and back by means of lines fastened to bow and stern and also to a pier planted on either bank. When loaded the boat would swing across the river, propelled by the current and would then be worked back by the stern line being adjusted for the purpose. It was a tedious operation and unsatisfactory in every way.

Some of the emigrants before starting out on their pilgrimage had made strong wagon beds with a view to using them as floats to ferry over rivers where fording could not be easily accomplished. Some of these parties had removed these boxes from the running gear, had stretched the canvass cover over the bottom and calked the joints to make them measurably water tight. In this way they were ferrying their goods and families over the river. The running gear of the wagon was then hauled over with lariats tied together to make a long line, and the cattle were made to swim. This operation was repeated in many instances on the journey.

The weather for a part of yesterday, last night and to-day exhibited some phenomenal features. Cold and benumbing on the descent from the Pass and very cold all night; water in pails and camp kettles froze so hard it had to be broken with a hatchet. In the morning the air was pure and rare, but had a way of stiffening one's fingers when exposed—a usual matter in a region where the snow never wholly melts. On the road to-day the sun was unobscured by clouds or mountains,

we reached the river again, at the ferry at a place where the variegated bluffs recede a distance back from the river on both sides. Here the river was one hundred yards wide, swift, deep and cold. This ferry boat was a more pretentious affair than the one left behind, but thought to be too frail and uncertain to trust animals on; so while the wagons and people were being transported the stock was driven into the river and made to swim over. About four hours were occupied in getting all the assembled companies over at a cost of two dollars and a half per wagon.

A few of us thought of swimming over and went down to the bank of the river and removed our clothes and tied them up in a compact bundle to carry over dry. The sun had warmed the atmosphere to a comfortable degree, but the clear, green water of the river was, oh, so cold; but in we went. I thought better of the swimming, and as a horse came along, belonging to a company traveling with us, I took hold of his tail, and holding my apparel over my head, was towed across the river very easily. That cold Green River bath is still fresh in memory.

Green River rises among the mass of mountains, the Wind River range, at the foot of Fremont's Peak, away to the north. The snow that melts on the western slope of that splendid peak, together with the disappearing mantle of the lesser peaks of the broken range, finds its way into some of the numerous sources of supply of the Green River, coursing down through gorges and cañons of surprising stateliness and beauty. The buttes in the expansive river basin are attractive

features of the landscape, and are an ever-changing picture adding beauty to the scenery. The waters of the river are an emerald green, flowing along banks hard enough to resist the encroachment of a flood. The bluffs along the river, up and down stream as far as we could observe as we passed along, and by the aid of a powerful glass were marvels of beauty, gorgeously colored, as seen at a little distance, of white, red and yellow, strangely intermingled by nature in artistic form, shaded with darker strains. The bluffs at times rise to a height of from one to two thousand feet, in places much higher. The altitude of the river at the crossing where our company ferried and swam over exceeds six thousand feet.

After a three hour drive from the river we found good pasture and water and camped for the night. Dried grass and grass roots, the only fuel to be had, did not supply heat for an elaborate supper, and that meal was partially a "cold bite."

Green River, when this portion of the country was part of the Spanish possessions in America, was called the Rio Verde. Americans preferred the former name, and from the date of the American occupation that title was universally accepted. Some trappers and frontiersmen camped in the vicinity of the ferry, said the Green River away to the southward lost itself in great cañons in the mountains in some unknown manner, which no hunter or explorer cared to trace out. A superstition existed among Indians and trappers that it poured its waters into a big hole in the earth

and that no one who ventured into the dark cañon ever came back. Away farther to the south it merged into and became the "Mysterious Colorado of the West."

None of that band of travel-worn emigrants paid much attention to railroad problems or possibilities, while slowly treading their way through the Green River bluffs and sterile plains, surrounded as they were by so much that was forbidding and depressing. None could then realize that the days of the emigrant train were numbered and that within six years these apparently inhospitable wilds would resound with the noise and roar of swarms of railroad builders and that the locomotive would whirl train loads of tourists over mountains and through chasms bringing before their delighted vision the wonderful beauties of this region, among scenes made attractive in a rapidly progressing development. It would have been but the dream of an enthusiast, colored as dreams always are, and dismissed to the realm of impossibility.

Camp 51, August 2.—The situation of last camp was not deemed suitable to remain in long, so we started out in good season to find a better. The only trail there was to follow passed between two ranges of broken hills—hardly high enough to be dignified by the appellation of mountains in this region of immense ranges—along a small stream of muddy water. The trail led into and through a low, swampy section which it was impossible to avoid, as it was skirted by high bluffs, leaving this the only pass.



VARIEGATED BLUFFS—GREEN RIVER.



Darkness and night approaching rapidly, it was necessary to camp in this undesirable place. Willow brush being in abundance, a considerable quantity of the small branches were cut for a floor to the lodge or tent on which the ladies who occupied it could spread their beds to avoid the damp ground. Pools of water were frequent, too much so to be pleasant, and the black ooze pressed up around one's feet at almost every step. It was a forced camp and not a pleasant one, and we resolved to get out of it as quickly as possible.

Camp 52, Sunday, August 3.—Toward morning the water began to rise in the stream which coursed through the marsh of last camp and overflow more deeply the low land bordering on it. After daybreak it was found that the road ahead was impassable without some labor being expended on it; the water appeared to be increasing. There had evidently been a cloud burst in the mountains or snow was melting very rapidly. After prospecting for a while it was found that a fair road could be made through the swamp, over which we could pass to higher ground.

Several hours were spent in cutting willow and making a kind of corduroy or mattress bottom to the numerous holes. Over this we passed with but little trouble. Mosquitoes and gnats were almost intolerable during this period of road-making and distressed the people and animals outrageously. But a stiff breeze springing up disposed of them incontinently.

Late in the afternoon we were enabled to move out of the swamp, and we soon found a good

and its rays were intensely hot and scalding in front, while one's back would feel as though the freezing point had been attained; in addition the wind was light and suffocating.

The surface of the ground along the trail seemed to be largely decomposed granite, coarse sand and gravel, mixed with white quartz and mica, which glistened in the sunlight. Of soil there was practically none, except in few spots where stunted grass was struggling for a bare existence. I pulled some of this grass and put it into the wagon, providing against a possible need at night. Everywhere about the camp it was as barren of verdure as a baseball ground, all vegetation having been eaten off by the numberless animals, picketed here before us, or scoured off by wind and sand; and we had only the little grass I had gathered and greasewood for our half-famished mules to nibble.

A small band of well-armed Indians passed our way in the afternoon, and as they acted quite friendly no anxiety was occasioned. They belonged to the Blackfoot tribe a long way to the north, and were out on a sort of a scout. They said their "hearts were good to the whites," and we concluded to believe them. They had their "war bonnets" on, the "heap big Injun" being distinguished by being decorated with eagle's claws on his forehead, and big feathers from the same bird in his bonnet and more vermilion on his ugly face. They were hideous enough at best, but their mounts were magnificent animals.

We were, on this last day of July, camped in a desert waste at the base of the Green River Moun-

GREEN RIVER CROSSING.





tains, another month on the way. The night was cold and cheerless.

Camp 50, August 1.—An early evening conference had been held by our company, and the head men of a number of trains detained at last camp, and it was decided not to attempt the river crossing there, as fifteen miles further on the west fork of the Green River in every way as difficult as the east fork, would also have to be crossed. It was decided to go on down the river a few miles to the junction of the two rivers where a good ferry had been established and make one ferriage cover the crossing. This lengthened the trip somewhat, as it took us out of the regular trail and over a rough and high mountain along a road obstructed with huge boulders and gullied by floods; but it was deemed the best route in the end.

At 3 o'clock camp was aroused and we sleepily shivered in the snapping morning air while packing and hitching up for the march. In an hour, just as day began to dawn, a long train of pilgrims was wending its way down the river, dragging along over a rough and irregular portion of the country. Part of the way the trail was along the river bottom and then over steep, high bluffs where they reach down to the water. To ascend these bluffs it was necessary to double teams; the descent had to be made with caution with all locks set.

About 9 o'clock halted for breakfast in the midst of a pleasant little meadow where there was an abundance of luscious grass. At 11 o'clock

camp between two mountain ranges which towered up into the dim space above us where the eagles are supposed to make their nests and to rear their young. A strong wind greeted us as we got beyond the low ground and continued until late into the night.

It was in the swamp where the road making was necessary that a little episode took place, dimly referred to in these chronicles of several days before, in the Platte Valley section, in which I was one of the central figures and which threatened for a few moments to mar the peace of the camp.

I had taken occasion several times, when a sick or worndown mule had been turned over to me to care for and get into camp late at night, to ask the two men who had the main wagon in charge to readjust the load so as to relieve the light wagon drawn by but one span of mules, of some of its weight. The provisions consumed on the whole journey from the Missouri River had been taken from the stores in the main wagon, drawn by four mules which naturally was becoming lighter every day, while the smaller wagon had the same weight it started with.

Some words were indulged in, and finally one of the gentlemen proffered to do me bodily harm if I interfered further in what he assured me was his especial affair; and he could have done it. The judge happened to hear the petty wrangle and inquired into the cause. He made an examination and lifted a hind wheel of each wagon—a sure test—and ordered the two gentlemen to proceed to readjust loads; they did it in an evi-

dent ill nature; about five hundred pounds of stores were transferred from the light to the big wagon, very much to the relief of one pair of mules and myself; my remarks found justification and I was the happiest of the three.

The absence of all kinds of game, either bird or animal, confined our company to the monotonous routine of fare supplied by our stores, except in the rare cases when an opportunity was offered to purchase fresh meats from a hunter or trader. It was a dull, unchanging menu.

At several points on the road men had located temporarily with bands of cattle they had driven in from the lower Platte Valley, to slaughter and sell to emigrants. It was a regularly established business for the cattle owners, and when their stock was gone they would return or send back for more. Beef from thirty to fifty cents a pound was an expensive luxury; but the natural longing for a change of diet, be it ever so slight, justified any price that might have been charged.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Trail Along the Snow Line—An Impromptu Voyage Down a Brawling Stream—Saving the Water Cask—Steep Grades—Abominable Roads—The Trials Met with on "Lander's Cut-off"—Cold and Cheerless Gorges—Rattlesnake Hunters on Duty—Gad-Flies Torture the Animals—View of the Wind River Mountains—Eternal Snow—Trees for Wagon Brakes—New Made Graves—An Indian Raid—A Supper in Silence—A Tainted Atmosphere—Towering Mountains—Another Lonely Grave—An Ideal Camp—Old Acquaintances Overtake Us—A Visit from Indians.

CAMP 53, August 4.—It had been expected that we would remain in camp fifty-two all day and over night, but late in the afternoon very unexpectedly the order was given to move on; it was a hard drive over a wretched road. Circumstances required the move.

Soon after starting the road led into a cañon in the mountains along a small but brawling creek, perhaps ten yards wide, mean average. The passage was very narrow in places and difficult to get through. Snow covered the sides and peaks of the mountains, rendering the air cold and disagreeable. The trail had been along the snow line for the previous twelve days, and during that time we were not out of sight of it. The road

through this narrow defile for a few miles had more serious obstructions crowded into it than we had yet encountered in five times the distance any time previous. The creek was like a cork-screw, the trail crossing it very frequently.

A water cask carried at the rear end of the large wagon slipped its fastenings in some way at one of these fords and went down stream by the run. I hurried to the next crossing and reached over, grasped the handle; its momentum took me off my feet instantly and down stream we went with great speed and in some style, the cask keeping me afloat and pulling me along rapidly. It was at the third crossing below that I was enabled to regain my feet and get ashore where the cold water could drip out of my clothing; but I saved the cask. It served a good purpose afterward in the midst of a barren waste when it was broken up to cook supper with.

I was encouraged in my impromptu voyage down that tumultuous stream by the shouts of many who saw the maneuver by such expressions as "hang to it," "look out for snags," "steady there," "wait at the bottom till we come," and other equally appropriate and solicitous expressions which I did not stop to listen to or make reply.

A growth of mixed varieties of timber in this cañon was the largest and most extensive we had found for several hundred miles; it was good to look at. One of the varieties was a balsam which emitted a very pleasant odor; its medicinal properties were very acceptable in many instances. At the point where the road left the cañon it began to

descend a steep grade for about one hundred yards, so that the teams had to be detached and the wagons lowered by hand and by means of ropes lashed to the rear axle, and by the same means dragged over a frail bridge at the bottom.

A high wind prevailed most of the day, and in exposed places the dust was exceeding heavy and always stifling.

We camped at a place where the mountains drew near together again and had for company other considerable trains. Great camp fires lighted up that narrow mountain valley and added a certain charm to the locality, which was increased as a brilliant moon rose above the ridges and poured a flood of silvery light over the scene. The myriads of large, active horse flies—they were classed as gad-flies—and mosquitoes were extremely troublesome, but the cool evening and camp fire smoke induced them to retire early.

Fortunately we cut grass several times during the day and carried it along, else the mules would have fared scantily that night.

Camp 54, August 5.—We sallied forth this morning as poorly informed of the character of the country through which the trail led as at any time since crossing Green River, with no conception of the difficulties to encounter and overcome. For the first two miles the road was simply superlatively execrable. When first viewed and constructed by Lieutenant—afterward General—F. W. Lander, it was undoubtedly a fairly good wagon road, considering the rough country it

traverses, and a "cut-off," as intended. But at the time I write of it was badly washed by mountain floods and was in a horrible condition, as no repairs were at any time made except such as passing emigrants found necessary in order to get through at all.

The road and the creek along side of which it was opened, seemed to dispute and divide the right of way, the creek, sometimes a torrent, frequently getting the best of it. The fords were full of large boulders that threw the wagons around with great force. Ours went through all right, but one belonging to a company next ahead of us was badly broken. The damaged vehicle was bolstered up with poles so as to get it to camp, when our wagon makers willingly volunteered and aided in making repairs.

The morning was cold and the great height of the mountains shut out the sun, and it was late before a ray of light and warmth could get in to dispell the gloom, or warm the atmosphere of this dark and cheerless gorge. These mountains were spurs of the Wind River range, a formidable part of the Rocky Mountain system. On clearing this place we passed into an opening where daylight was unobscured, then over a level tableland and stopped for noon.

The drive had been a long one, but owing to the tortuous meanderings of the road we had accomplished a comparatively short distance. To add to the creepy sensations one naturally feels in such surroundings, the slimy, spotted hide of an occasional rattlesnake was seen as he slowly wormed his way out of the road behind a rock;

several fell short in their calculations and failed to escape.

The road in the afternoon was over a series of high and steep mountains, continuously way up and then down, a tedious climb and troublesome descent. At the base of each elevated ridge was a brawling torrent full of boulders and other obstacles; the latter being the remains of log bridges which had been either partially washed away or broken down; a way around them had to be obtained.

During the afternoon the gorge led due west; toward evening the course changed to north. The mountain sides and hollows were heavily timbered with large spruce and alder trees, with some pine and hemlock, and everywhere there was a thick undergrowth. The road had been constructed by felling these trees and then dragging them out of the way, along the opening thus made, as they could not be thrown down and outward and there left.

Throughout the afternoon, gnats, mosquitoes and horse flies seemed to conspire to make life a burden to man and beast. The animals suffered terribly without complaining; the emigrants could fight them off and say hard things as a slight measure of relief.

These horse flies were nearly as large as the domestic honey bee, and their beaks were like steel-pointed needles. When they would light on an animal and thrust that needle into him, it would bring a groan as well as blood. The man of the party walked with their animals to watch these venomous things and kill them when they

lighted. It was constant work, and one's hands were bloody continually while the flies were around.

These flies were always the terror of the cavalry when out scouting in the mountains on Indian hunting expeditions, and many a valuable horse had been reported killed in a short time by the hordes of the ravenous pests, attacking in such great numbers that they would suck enough of blood from a horse or mule to cause it to die in a short time.

From the crest of one of the highest ridges which we crossed a fine view of the main range of the Wind River Mountains was in sight to the east, their distant peaks enveloped in a deep purple cloud that gave a gloomy aspect to the view. Fremont's Peak, now to the eastward, towers up as the one chief sentinel amid a vast number with aspirations not so lofty.

Camped at an early hour, wearied and careworn. Measured in an air line the distance covered to-day was very unsatisfactory.

Distances covered did not seem very great when counted by our slow plodding process.

Camp 55, August 6.—The story of the road to-day would be essentially a repetition of yesterday's in part, and far worse for the rest; there were variations, however. Crossed three lofty mountains, and to scale them the road wound around in the form of a spiral stairway, like the Sunday school pictures of the Tower of Babel. The earth and the rock had been hewn out of the face of an almost perpendicular mountain ridge

to make a narrow trail, barely sufficient for the spread of a wagon. The least slide or miss move would have plunged wagon and all to fearful depths below. The descent was always steeper and more dangerous than the ascent, the road having been made for westward, not eastern travel, the east slope always being devised to this end.

Sometimes on this drive, lines were made fast to the rear axle and wagons eased down by hand, the teams being taken off; at other times a fair-sized brushy tree would be cut down and lashed to the rear of the wagon to act as a drag to keep it from plunging over the animals, the hind wheels being securely locked besides.

The top of these mountains were elevated high above many of their fellow peaks; in the gulfs below were beds of eternal ice and snow; the air was light and unsatisfying. Along their sides and up the adjacent gorges was an impenetrable growth of timber. In many places fires have raged in the forests, and thousands of acres were burned over, leaving the blackened, dead, limbless trunks like tapering spires, pointing heavenward in mute evidence of the awful flames which had swept through them.

Two lonely graves in an open space on the top of one of these mountains gave a saddening feeling to all as we passed. One was that of a woman who was worn out by terrible hardships, an easy prey to mountain fever; the other, of a man supposed to have been killed by Indians, and buried by a train just ahead of us. The grave of the woman was enclosed by a neat picket fence built

by loving hands from materials contributed by accompanying emigrants. Both graves were heavily weighted with large boulders to preserve the remains from wolves and other kindred beasts.

The last gorge the road led into seemed to be down, down to a limitless abyss; a deep, swift torrent rushed along at the bottom of it which had to be crossed repeatedly. For several rods a logway had once done good service, but when we passed that way it was in a wretched condition.

There was no alternative and we had to camp in these mountain fastnesses; the place was not selected, it was forced upon us, as well as on many past and to follow; in the one place only where there was room to camp, with no forage, no timber, only scrubby brush; it was getting dark. Willow branches were all the mules got for forage, weary as they were.

The tent was pitched in the dust, but I made it my business to cut willow brush to carpet the floor so the ladies might have a comfortable place to rest. I had done this same thing before.

A cold supper was eaten in grim silence, and the camp soon relapsed into quietness. The sky became overcast with storm clouds, obscuring the moon; fires were kindled all along the line to keep up appearances of cheerfulness as also let the guards have some warmth.

A provoking occurrence prevented our getting an early start this morning. A mule got loose during the night and strayed away from camp, returning to the place where we halted at noon yesterday, about ten miles. A ride back to recover the animal was neither easy nor agreeable.

The taint in the atmosphere arising from decaying animals did not add to our comfort on that otherwise disagreeable night.

Camp 56, August 7.—To be relieved from the villainous surroundings of last camp and to gain something to enable our animals to live, we again hurried out on the road at an early hour; it was nearly 5 o'clock before the trail could be sufficiently distinguished through the darkness so as to be followed. The cold was intense, tho no ice formed during the night. A few miles over a rough road that momentarily threatened our animals with injury and the wagons with destruction, we came unexpectedly upon a delightful little valley, an oasis in the wilderness, where everything we were in quest of abounded.

Here we breakfasted with the utmost satisfaction, rested and napped. The threatened storm of last night failed to appear, but a slight shower occurred during the morning drive, which laid the dust quite acceptably, but rendered the surface of the road very slippery. The thunder and lightning were much more noisy and vivid than was the rain troublesome. Thunder was a novelty in these mountains, as we had heard none for a considerable time, but it had the same old familiar sound.

The face of the country was mountainous; mountains to the right of us, mountains to the left of us, mountains towering over us, gigantic in proportions, and heavily timbered. Passed directly over the summits of three to-day. From the crest of the last, the loftiest of all, a scene

was presented which baffled description, and was pleasing in every sense; never were the children of Israel more gratified with a view of the promised land than was our little party when our eyes rested upon a beautiful valley that lay spread out invitingly before us at the base of the mountain.

Beautiful as was the distant picture it proved not to be overdrawn in our vision; it was all we thought it to be. The imagination of a landscape artist could hardly transfer to his canvass anything more magnificent. There was no sign of life in that beautiful panorama; only a solitude that would become painful if one's tarrying were prolonged. Having been effectually shut up in the dismal recesses of the mountains so long, in a dark and shadowy realm, here at least we thought some little enjoyment could be taken.

At the edge of this valley at the foot of a hill and shaded by a grove of aspen was another new grave, made but yesterday, that of a young woman; a fearful place to die, a desolate place to be buried. Involuntarily the thought arose:

"Hearts are bounding, mirth is gushing, all is joy, but yet anon
Comes the wail of dying mortals, and the shadows travel on!"

Camped in a very pleasant location, with necessities in abundance, and we were soon surrounded by several large trains. Evening beautiful, but cold. It is generally conceded that the past winter was one of the most severe known. The intense and prolonged cold, together with the deep snow, had killed the feed everywhere, while the melting of the snow had caused floods

of an unprecedented character, which had washed the roads badly, in places utterly destroying them. Land slides among the mountains had filled the gorges, choking up many roadways, causing infinite labor and delays. It was remarkable that casualties among the emigrant trains were so seldom reported.

Camp 57, August 8.—Broke camp this morning in a leisurely manner, the hour for stirring being late enough deferred to give all concerned a long, much-needed rest. It was intended to make but a short drive and locate for the day. A few miles out served to place us in the ideal situation earnestly wished for. The valley floor was smooth, offering easy wheeling, the grass tall and of excellent variety, mixed somewhat with wild oats, which crowded the trail closely. The mules nibbled as they went, and for mules they passed their time advantageously. The soil was deep and rich with scarcely a trace of sand or gravel. Camped near a considerable mountain stream where there were a large number of emigrants who had preceded us, forming several big trains: we forded the creek and located on the bank opposite.

In the meantime other large parties came up and formed camp in the neighborhood. Altogether there was a formidable array of men, women, animals and wagons. One never knows who or what is following on such a trip. Wood being scarce, parties were detailed to go to the mountains a mile and a half distant to "pack" wood for cooking and camp fires; not a task to

be ardently sought for above many other occupations.

There was a dearth of amusement here, so some of us scouted for the evidence of fish in the embryo river; but not a finny denizen was discovered. We had noticed this absence of trout in many mountain streams along the way. In the evening our neighbors over the way entertained themselves in a joyous manner, judging from the roars of laughter and strains of the violin and accordeon.

August 9.—Part of the train concluded to remain located until the next Sunday morning; others being anxious to see the end of a trying journey moved on, including our near neighbors. During evening other large parties came up and occupied the abandoned camp grounds, among them being a number of acquaintances we had formed and left behind, and a few among them being our Iowa friends, who became separated from us on the road. The encampment was not materially reduced, there being company enough for all purposes.

A few Indians, well armed and grotesquely tricked out and painted, as all aborigines we had seen so far had been, rode up, and after viewing our company over, passed on in pursuit of what they might have started out for. Indians so far have offered our large parties no molestation. Indians never attack parties in greater numbers than their own, and very seldom an equal number; they always seek victims in small companies and take them at a disadvantage.

CHAPTER XIX.

Keeping Track of the Day of the Month—A Pretty Valley—Salt Springs—A Wolf Serenade—August Ice—Beautiful Mottled Quartz—The Stork's Visit—A Birth on the Desert—Blinding Dust—Oxen in a Terrible Stampede—An Awful Death—Melancholy Funeral Rites—Abandoned Equipage—Unwritten Laws—A Sorrowful Picture—Mountain Fever Prevalent—Evidences of Volcanic Tempests—Blistering Heat—Distressing Dust Storm—The "Sage Desert of the Mountains"—A Note of Warning—An Indian Raid—A Large Camp—Delightful Soda Springs—Almost Another Stampede—Rattlesnakes and Rattlesnakes—Universal Battle Ground—Additional Fresh Made Graves—Evidence of a Fight with Indians.

CAMP 58, Sunday, August 10.—About the only way to maintain a knowledge of the days of the week and of the month and realize when Sunday came, was to keep a note book handy and write up a diary each day, else one soon would lose all trace of the days of the week, and one day could not be distinguished from another; the dreary tread-mill is the same each day until the tedious monotony becomes merged into one continued, wearing, changeless grind. The present camp was made on Sunday evening, as noted in the initial date line. We were slow in packing up and

moving out of the pretty valley where we had lingered and enjoyed so much that gave strength and vitality. A short drive took us to the end of the valley and into a narrow opening in the mountains which bordered it on the west, following, as usual in such cases, the devious course of the stream this water gap was made for. A number of crossings had to be made, only one beset with difficulties, and that one caused but a brief delay; this passage was directly north and south. On emerging from the cañon we passed a very fine salt spring and over a portion of a salt marsh.

When we rounded an abrupt bluff, at the north portal, we found another and larger salt spring also on the edge of a wide salt marsh. The water in both of these springs was strong brine, which in evaporating left a thick deposit of pure salt over a large surface, and as pure and white as the "beautiful snow," and of extra quality. Some was gathered in large flakes as souvenirs, and much besides for a practical or culinary use. A meadow with excellent grass being near, we halted for the noon-tide refreshment. A big drove of animals belonging to emigrant trains gathered around this salt deposit and licked it with unwonted relish.

The roads in the afternoon were alternately good and bad; and when the latter they were thoroughly so. The roughest and most to be dreaded were the floors of the cañons, as they were literally paved with big loose boulders. An easy ascent it was, scaling the summit of a pretentious mountain, though the drive was long. The descent was steep and therefore brief, and

camp was located on an elevated plateau or table near a creek which tumbled along down the mountain, making as much noise in so doing as was possible under the circumstances; wood and good feed in endless quantities were found; the camp fires lighted up the chilly caverns along the mountain side, and startled the night birds out of a drowsy lethargy, as also a pack of howling beasts. Their howls echoed and re-echoed among the crags and cliffs—the Spaniards left the name farallon here for crag—and rolled away off down into the lower regions at the base of the hills until lost, like an angry whine, in the distance. There may have been a dozen wolves watching those camp fires, but their angry protests made them seem to be an hundred. The day was cool, the night decidedly chilly.

Camp 59, August 11.—A keen frost last night produced ice thick enough to withstand a heavy blow to break it. Naturally the air, at the hour our camp was required to be astir, was chilly and biting. To be out in the open as soon as the rays of the morning sun begin to light up the mountain tops, after being roused a few times in the night to adjust bed clothing, so as to secure warmth and comfort, or to take a trick at guard duty, is not designed to allay one's feelings nor mollify a ruffled temper; a camp fire on a cold morning, no matter how energetic it burns, has a faculty of warming one side to an undue degree, while the other side may be creepy with cold. The altitude of this valley and the perpetual snows around it keeps the atmosphere far below temperate heat

in the day time, and causes the mercury to sink down, down in the tube in the night.

The first move in the morning was to cross an expansive marsh, muddy and sticky; we could not go around it; and then to surmount a high ridge to a large valley on the north side. This last mountain was chiefly a splendid, compact granite, seamed in places with streaks of green and purple tinted veins on a nearly forty-five degree slope. Occasionally there were exposed flanks of mottled quartz, and distinct evidences of volcanic action; this last we had noted for a few days past, but our party were not hunting for geological curiosities nor evidence of the age of the continental backbone; we had all we could do to stiffen up our own individual backbones.

During the afternoon we passed an ox train consisting of a number of wagons that had been driven off the main trail a short distance and halted. The unusual act seemed strange and incited comment. Inquiry developed that it was an interesting occasion; that the stork of the fairies had visited that particular train requiring a temporary surcease of traveling operations. The next day it was reported that mother and child were again on the journey, doing as finely as forbidding circumstances would permit. It would be curious to know where a future registration or marriage certificate located that child's birthplace; supposing always that it grew to maturity and then mated; we wished it well as we passed on.

A low range of foothills divided the valley into two parts; into the second we drove, passing around on the west margin of a large pond which

might be dignified by being called a lake, bordered by a swamp grown up with rushes. Great flocks of ducks hovered over this lake or swam on its placid surface. Ambitious hunters got out after those birds, and a few of them were bagged; but as retrieving dogs were wanting, the sport lost most of its interest, the ducks when shot settling beyond reach; roast duck in consequence had to be scattered about very thin among the campers.

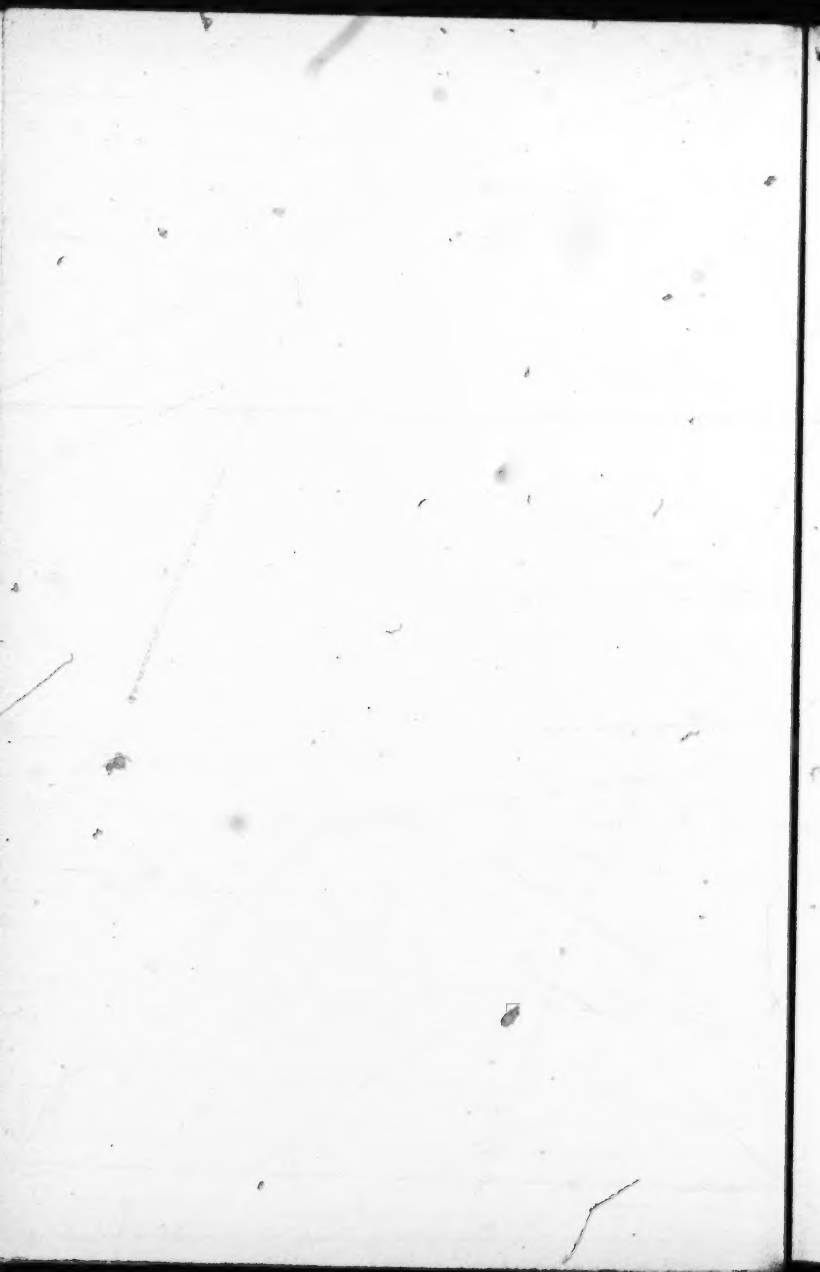
When the trail reachd higher land we camped for the night by a good spring of cold water. A growth of small timber afforded fuel enough for all demands. A view from our elevated plateau revealed a great number of trains already in camp or moving on to find a favorable spot.

Scarcely wind enough all day to float a feather, and the clouds of dust were blinding and suffocating. Horses, oxen and mules had fallen into the same easy, slow moving gait; so all emigrant trains moved along the trail near together.

A terrible tragedy occurred this morning, one of the saddest for the entire journey, a young lady being trampled to death by a band of furious oxen belonging to one of the Iowa caravans, written of a month ago. These emigrants usually organized into large companies at the Missouri River and maintained them to the end of the journey, unless divided in the interior by the trail diverging to different points whither the members of a party wished to go. It was the practice at night, when going into camp, to form the wagons into a large oval or ellipse-shaped corral, the head end of the wagon inward, the hubs of all of them just about touching, the oxen then being all in-



STAMPEDE OF CATTLE—GIRL KILLED.



side. Each wagon would be assigned its uniform place, and every ox knew his position. The last wagon would be left out of the circle until the oxen had been removed, or until the camp was closed for the night. This form was for safety in case of an attack by hostile Indians, the wagons and ox yokes making a secure barricade. On a number of occasions when trouble was anticipated, the oxen would be driven into the corral after feeding and there guarded over night. Fifty or seventy-five wagons made a very large camp when in the form described, enclosing nearly two acres of ground.

This morning at the usual hour the key wagon had been run out, and the oxen, to the number of quite or nearly two hundred, had been driven into the corral preparatory to being yoked up. On the tongue of this key wagon a young lady about eighteen or nineteen years of age had sat down and was combing her hair, holding a small hand mirror. From some unknown cause, one old ox jumped up and snorted; then another and another did the same; others thereupon became excited, and began to surge, snort and crack their horns together, and pandemonium commenced; the whole band suddenly got beyond control. The scene which followed beggared description; in their mad fury they made a rush for the narrow opening and a stampede, like a whirlwind, was in full swing, with every animal bellowing as never before.

Before the young woman realized her danger and could make her escape, she was caught under the hoofs of the now frightened beasts and was

literally trampled into a mass of fine bones and muddy paste, little being left to identify the remains but a few pieces of bone and a mass of long hair. The looking glass was powdered into shining particles. The wagon and its contents were shattered to pieces and practically ruined. The screams and shouts of the terror-stricken beholders added much to the horror of the terrible occasion.

When the cyclonic rush was over a portion of a muddy mass, stained with blood, a few moments before a living human being, with the high hopes of young womanhood, was sorrowfully gathered up; a rough coffin was improvised from cracker boxes and such scraps of lumber as could be obtained from among the company, and the remains given a decent burial with every available form of Christian ceremony such as could be improvised in that region. Probably the poor girl never knew what struck her, so suddenly did everything commence and cease. The solemn words and tones of old familiar funeral hymns, such as "China," "Heber," etc., were rendered in such manner as might have been expected:

"Why do we mourn departing friends,
Or shake at death's alarm?"

"Thou art gone to the grave, but we will not deplore
thee,
Though sorrow and darkness encompass the
tomb."

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly."

The singing had a mournful and weird sound as chanted by the grief-stricken assembly out in that desert waste over one who was with them two hours previous. Every train halted as it reached the scene, and remained until the funeral rites were over.

The cattle had run as only thoroughly frightened animals can for ten or twelve miles, until entirely exhausted they fell one by one along the road, winded and panting, and the wild stampede was over. Those animals had patiently toiled and tugged through deep and burning sands under a pitiless sun for a thousand miles, footsore and weary, ready to wander away and die as many did, yet they became terrified at nothing—locoed it is usually termed—and stampeded in a tremendous panic; nothing whatever could be discovered as to the cause of the rout. It took two or three days to get the cattle together and the trains ready to move on again. The whole company, men, women and children worn out, heart-sick and bereaved, did not recover from that fearful excitement during the remainder of the journey.

Since leaving the Devil's Gate on the Sweetwater, many articles of more or less value were noticed strewn along the trail, thrown away and abandoned by emigrants who, discouraged, were lightening their loads of everything not absolutely necessary. These discarded things were of all descriptions, a great many being costly shot-guns and rifles, revolvers, empty powder flasks, stoves and table ware, etc. The guns had all been broken, some beyond repair. Included also in the wreckage were broken and dismantled wagons,

portions of harness, ox yokes and chains, everything conceivable.

In former years it was an unwritten law among emigrants over the plains that when a wagon had been abandoned it must be burned or otherwise rendered entirely useless. This destructive rule was afterwards changed, by common consent, and abandoned wagons were to be left uninjured by the side of the trail so that other emigrants following who might need any part of a disabled vehicle to repair his own could get it. This worked advantageously, but guns were always to be broken lest they fall into the hands of Indians and be used against the whites. An unpleasant sensation was experienced by the beholder when a man would bring a beautiful and costly gun down on a rock with a blow that would shiver its stock and working parts into atoms.

Some of the parties we had met and traveled with in the lower Platte Valley were in this series of desolate valleys of yesterday and to-day; but how changed! Their big iron cook stoves were behind somewhere in the mountains; the plows, hoes and rakes were on the roadside; some of the cows had been slaughtered for beef or had died from exhaustion; the chickens and their coops alike had disappeared, and what dogs were still alive were footsore and crippled and had a dejected, discouraged look. The individual members of the outfits were worn down with labor, care and anxiety, and the young people no longer fiddled, danced and sang as they once did. The realities of a journey which few of them comprehended in advance were being impressed deeper

and deeper on their minds and bodies as the days went by. Many a forlorn, careworn and heart-broken mother regretted the day she left her old Iowa or Illinois home, to risk the awful strain of an overland journey to an unknown country. Many a loved one had been laid in a shallow grave under sand and rocks in lonely regions, there to await the final call. Vain regrets were useless now; self-preservation required every one to push on; lagging behind meant death, possibly something worse if captured by Indians.

Cases of mountain fever were reported as numerous, with other unavoidable diseases, and as medicines and doctors were scarce, and medical knowledge deficient, our medicine chest was frequently drawn upon, being well supplied with relief remedies for fever and all other complaints incident to this locality. Judge Hewitt freely aided all sufferers when he heard of them, if any were within reach, and they were grateful for the kindness extended.

These notes, made the night of August 11th by a dim camp fire, were brought to a close when the dying embers flickered and finally went out, leaving silence and darkness and a horrid memory of that terrible day to linger like a nightmare for days to follow.

Camp 60, August 12.—To-day the roads wound around among the hills, taking advantage of ravines and valleys for a smoother way. This was in some measure attained; but in places, however, the road was among and over immense fields of boulders, large and small, of volcanic origin,

porous much like a sponge, seared and perforated by terrific tempests of flame in some long past age.

In the morning the sky was cloudless and the air close and lifeless; the sun soon dispelled the clouds and shone down hot and blistering on that desolate plain and the pilgrims traversing it. Many creeks had to be crossed, and one considerable river, the Little Blackfoot, was wide, deep and rapid. From the ford the river runs through a wide, open plain, deep down with perpendicular banks of solid basalt rock. It would have been impossible to get water from that river along here if we had needed it ever so much. We followed the course of the river for several miles until on veering to the westward, we entered an immense valley where camp was located on the confines of the plains amid great stretches of sage and sand galore.

The hills all around were barren and treeless, the plains and small valleys covered with a heavy growth of sagebrush; but the prickly pear and other cacti had partially disappeared.

We had been used to stifling dust, but to-day we had more than the usual allowance; a stiff wind all day kept the air filled with clouds of blinding dust, which contained enough alkali to cause great distress.

We had so far cleared the rough, inhospitable mountains as to feel jubilant—much like lifting up our voices in song, something like:

"Oh, ain't I glad I got out of the wilderness," etc.

We had cleared the mountains, but when we came fully to realize that we had entered into

the "Sage Desert of the Mountains," the Fort Hall Valley—politely so termed—there was scant cause for congratulation.

Near camp a notice was posted warning emigrants to be careful, to keep on guard against surprise and Indian depredations; advising all to stop here and gather in large companies for safety before proceeding to Fort Hall. "In union there is strength." The story as told on the paper, dimly written with pencil, was to the effect that on the 8th inst., a party of traders were returning home from California, and when at or near our present camping place were surprised and set upon by Indians in the night, and three of them badly wounded and fourteen of their horses killed and their packs stolen. The next day, the 9th, six men with two wagons were attacked by redskins, four men killed and one wagon taken with all the provisions and camp fixtures it contained. This intelligence was not reassuring, and naturally created considerable apprehension among the camps.

Camped near us was a large company, principally families, en route to the Salmon River mines, or Oregon. There was a goodly number of women and children; combined we numbered about one hundred well-armed, effective men, and we deemed ourselves quite safe from attack; in any event strong enough to repel an ordinary band of Indians.

A very large soda spring near the camp ground was visited by all. The waters were delightful and sparkled and bubbled as tho drawn from a charged fountain. The carbonic acid gas

would not have effervesced with pleasanter effect if mixed with the water by mechanical means.

The mules were picketed out not far from camp with good bunch grass to feed on; a warm rain was quietly falling as the camp sank to slumber.

Camp 61, August 13.—We had been out on the march but a short time this morning when an incipient stampede occurred among the cattle belonging to the train we were with, the animals being frightened by a dog. That unoffending animal had merely run up suddenly alongside of the train and then crossed the trail ahead of it. It takes very little to start an uncontrollable excitement or a mad fury with man or beast when everything is under high tension. For a few moments it looked serious, but soon quieted down; one man was injured, but not seriously. In some respects, other animals vary but slightly from the human family. Both will become panic-stricken and stampede and trample each other into dust with but slight provocation. Evolution has not proceeded far enough.

The route to-day was over a continuation of foothills and a succession of desert valleys, principally sandy. The absence of rocks was noticeable, and evidences of volcanic action were unobserved, if any were there. The whole stretch was barren and fruitless, not a living thing existed excepting repulsive crawling creatures that seemed to subsist on hot air alone. Rattlesnakes were there, as they are everywhere in places under the awful ban of creation, and some of them

gave up their rattles without delay or offering resistance. We heard of a number of horses and mules being struck within a few days by these desert terrors and dying in indescribable agony. What these deadly, crawling, repulsive reptiles were created for passes all understanding, unless to be in keeping with the curse theology tells of.

No useful vegetation could grow in this abode of the infernals, however well disposed; it is the very "abomination of desolation" complete, a desert without a serious rival on earth. Early explorers and emigrants, condemned to cross its arid and terrible stretches, unite in calling it "The Sage Desert of the Mountains," and while the title is feeble compared to the reality, it stands because generally accepted.

In full accord with all its other forbidding aspects, this desolate region has ever been the war-ring ground of predatory Indians from the north, the south, the east and the west, including the Snakes, the Sioux—the Apaches of the north—the Shoshones, the Blackfeet, the Crows, the Gros Ventres, the Utes, the Piegans, the Bloods, the Bannocks, and many other tribes, fierce and war-like. They would all ride their raids through here; it was the "dark and bloody ground" of the mountain district. They passed this way in making war on each other, and all made common cause against the poor emigrant who was mercilessly robbed and murdered, with the utmost impartiality, by all the red devils.

Early in the afternoon we passed the grave of an unknown man, whose body was found to-day by a company just ahead of us, and by them bur-

ied with decency. He had been shot in the back of the head with buckshot. He was supposed to have been killed by Indians, but suspicious circumstances led to the belief of foul play, as strange things are constantly occurring where rules of civilized society are unrecognized or unknown.

As the road turned towards the mountains where forage and water could be obtained, thither we went, and toward sunset camped by a rapid stream between two high mountains whose tops were covered with snow. Heavy trains came up and camped near us. The altitude of the Desert—a capital D is the best mode of expression—is so elevated that mountains do not have to be of extraordinary height above the plain for their peaks to pierce the clouds, and be above the snow line. We moved slowly to-day, so as to keep near accompanying trains. It was necessary to climb a long way up the side of one of these mountains for a supply of wood for cooking the evening meal.

Across the creek, in a conspicuous place, were the graves of the four men, spoken of previously, who had been murdered by Indians. The bodies were discovered and recognized by friends a few days afterwards, and given proper interment, the last tribute of friend to friend in this dismal region. The red fiends, not to leave their bloody work half done, had scalped and frightfully mutilated the bodies of their victims and then made off with their plunder. We visited the scene of the conflict, which bore evidence of a severe struggle and a hard contested field; it is ever difficult to

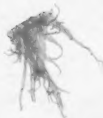
tell what damage has been inflicted on an unseen Indian foe, as they always carry away their dead and wounded, if there are any.

This was the work of Indian "braves." There were persistent, and what were deemed well authenticated stories that Mormons were largely mixed up in these Indian forays; that they incited much of the murderous action, and would lend assistance, where needed, and that most of the articles obtained by robbing and murdering emigrants, other than guns, ammunition and knives, found their way to Salt Lake City, and a ready market. No doubt our party had been watched and trailed along the way by Indians and their white allies, as signal fires in the mountains indicated; but an appearance of strength was a sure protection. The Danites and the John D. Lees were known of all frontiersmen and defenseless emigrants, and their bloody deeds struck terror to the hearts of all. The terrible history of that portion of the frontier experience remains yet to be written.

An unusual amount of wreckage strewn on every hand along the trail of to-day was additional and abundant proof of distress and trouble ahead. New made graves, abandoned wagons, cattle dying, all things imaginable thrown away, sorrowfully multiplied the stories of misery, if further evidence were needed. We cared not to ask about or think of what might be taking place among those who were following; but we could not escape a knowledge of what was with us and in advance of us. Sickness prevailed very largely, and many others found a last resting place among

the inhospitable sage plains of the mountains; a sepulcher, a bed of sand; a tombstone, a pile of protecting rocks.

When a flock of big, ugly buzzards were seen hovering over a spot in the desert, or squalling and quarrelling, it was only too evident that some poor animal had fallen from exhaustion and the carrion birds were in at the feast. No one once thought of shooting at one of these foul scavengers; it would have been too sickening, and they were left to their putrid work.



CHAPTER XX.

An Immense Train—Wild and Rough Country and Roads—A Tremendous Torrent—A Great Plain—Traveling Away from Water—Take the Back Track—A Good Camp Ground—Nervous Excitement—Camp Aroused—Doubling on Our Trail at Midnight—Thrifty Mormon Freighters—Gathering Abandoned Outfits—The Barouche of the Platte Valley Train—Retracing Our Course—Rain Caused a Halt—Back Into Our Old Camp—Parting of the Ways Again—Wonderful Midnight Mirage—We Take the Trail Leading North—Good-bye to Companions—Falls of the Snake River.

CAMP 62, August 14.—Our cavalcade, when it was marshaled this morning, and arranged in close marching order, constituted a train over a mile in length. In the column were all the companies which had gathered the evening before; because of the warning given it was thought to be safer to go on together and camp near each other at night. The train was formidable in the number of wagons and length of column at least. There were about one hundred and twenty-five men and perhaps fifty women in the combined companies. Toward evening each man got out his rifle and looked carefully at its condition to make sure that it would go off, if needful, and in the right direction, and carried it until camp was.

made; but Indian assaults were never made by daylight.

The roads were generally good, tho rocky and rough at times. The rocks were solid masses of granite and quartz, having very slight volcanic appearance, looking more as if they had been broken off from mountain crags by some seismic tempest and washed down by an overwhelming primeval flood. It took some time to get through the first desert valley; then we passed over a low mountain spur and followed down the course of a stream which at times was a pretentious torrent.

The channel of the river was deep, and the sides were of perpendicular rock. I ascended a cliff overhanging the depth; far below flowed the torrent, constantly wearing away the granite surface, against which the water rushed in apparent anger at restraint. The mountains at the right were lofty, composed of rock thrown up in many peculiar shapes and forms. From the top of a lofty ridge, a valley of great extent came in view, sinking to the south and west so that it was difficult to tell where the plain ended and the horizon began. Not a bird or even a butterfly was seen among those heights.

This opening, thus brought to view, was the main portion of the Sage Desert—the plains of Fort Hall. When we cleared the gorge we moved out into the plain with high hopes and buoyant spirits, fully expecting to reach the Fort by evening. Little did we know about distances or how to compute them in advance amid such chaotic scenes. Some one with more information than we possessed said that the destination the cut-off

led to was near the foot of this range. At the foot of these hills between two ridges was a good camp ground where a large ox train had already located.

The plain was a vast area of sand and was much more forbidding in every aspect than were the deserts of two days ago, as could possibly be imagined; bunch grass appeared in places and sagebush everywhere thick, rank and troublesome.

The stifling atmosphere caused all living things to gasp for breath, and they suffered from its heated quality. The dust was deep in the trail, and the wagon wheels sank far into it as we toiled along.

We had not followed the trail out into the desert far when it became painfully evident that we were widening the distance between ourselves and water, and with no indication ahead when we would reach it if we kept on. All the teams were jaded and weary, the sand getting deeper and more stifling, the wheeling growing steadily heavier.

When one is in a quandary, the best thing to do is to stop and consider; in railroading this is: "When in doubt, ask for orders." We stopped, and after consideration, with none to give orders, concluded to push forward. A mile or two further on another halt was called.

This time it was deemed best to turn back; so we retraced the desert trail a considerable distance, then turned off the main course to a creek where there was good grass and willows for fuel, and camped.

The shades of evening were far advanced before camp became settled; the mules had fed well from the excellent forage and had lain down early. Some of the nervous ones, always apprehensive of danger, about dark began to whisper around, that in view of the many Indian outrages that had been committed in this desert the lives of our party were being jeopardized by remaining in that place; that we were certainly inviting a visit from some wandering bands of scalp-hunting savages. The more these people whispered, the more nervous they got. Camp fires had all been extinguished at an early hour so as not to attract the notice of any possible sneaking redskin. The tension grew too great, increasing momentarily, and when the women of the company came to hear of the subdued, anxious talk, sleep was banished for the night; and yet there were more than one hundred well-armed men in the company.

Strange as it may appear, the whole camp was aroused at eleven o'clock, everything packed in quick order and in silence, and the company retraced its way, countermarching five miles to the camp of the ox train at the base of the hills, and camped under its protection the rest of the night. In reaching this camp we passed through a narrow gap in the hills where the whole train could have been routed and broken up in quick order had there been a few Indians there to do it. This retrograde movement was accomplished in becoming silence. The old couplet might be repeated here, as it applied quite well:

"The king of Spain with twice ten thousand men
Marched up a hill—and then marched down again!"

But there was no more of this kind of movement after this occasion. The ones who were always in agitation and trembling with fear—engendering anxiety in the minds of associates when not justified, separated from the others more self-contained and went their own way. There was absolutely no reason or justification whatever for that foolish midnight march. We have now been one month from Fort Laramie.

That was a pitiful scene which was depicted on canvas by the artist, Charles Nahl, a California argonaut, showing the misery of a family prostrated by the death of one of their oxen, having but one left out of four they had started with. The family, as shown in the picture, sketched from life, were stranded in the midst of one of these awful desert charnel houses for man and beast, and were weeping over the death struggles of one of their oxen, a faithful old beast that had toiled through heat and cold, over deep sandy wastes and rough mountains only to yield up his life in that awful region at a time when draught animals were the most needed, the lives of a family largely depending on them, and everything was strained to the utmost limit of endurance. Even the face of the old ox expressed a look of almost human sorrow, in the gasping agony of death.

This picture in actual relief was a familiar one to every considerable company of emigrants who ever made the journey over the plains, in early days, and has been reproduced in all its oppressive and distressing horrors scores of times. Its perpetuation on canvas will serve to remind com-

ing generations privileged to see it, of a terrible past experience which was often the lot of early pioneers.

The scene was reproduced to-day, and it had lost none of its pitiful characteristics since the painter transferred the early experience to canvas. The family had endured everything but death itself on the journey; privation, hunger, thirst, sickness, wrecking of wagon, loss of one yoke of their oxen by alkali water poison, finally the death of one of the remaining pair on this desolate, accursed plain. Their heart-broken misery softened flinty hearts, and appealed to sympathetic ones, and the family were given assistance to enable them to tide over the space which separated them from a land of promise, two or three hundred miles further on.

Over this sterile and inhospitable region, a desert rivaling the Sahara, under the fierce blaze of a cloudless, pitiless sun in a withering heat that dries the moisture from the eyes and sears the eyeballs, heaven withholds refreshing rains and the earth yields nothing that is useful to man; naught has grown in that blistering sand that would furnish shade even for one brief moment to a bewildered, famishing creature unfortunately compelled to traverse it.

Very soon after the journey began, it was noticed that among the great bodies of emigrants there was a thoughtless disregard of economy in caring for provisions left over from meals. Considerable quantities of whatever might be left at each meal would be heedlessly thrown away, as tho each spread were a picnic, with little thought

or care for what might come on the morrow. The heads of large families offended in this way as often as any. The thought occurred frequently that it would require a large stock of provisions to carry a family over a two or three thousand mile journey when a large proportion of what was prepared and uneaten, was thrown away. And so it proved. Some parties started out only half provisioned, in the first place, as has been narrated previously in these chronicles.

Mormon freighters, up from Salt Lake, were thrifty fellows of the baser sort, as was observed to-day. Two or three of them gave an object lesson which was quite expressive. The men made it a profitable occupation to take heavy stocks of provisions and such other staples as would find a ready sale, and drive to the northward from Salt Lake City to intercept the streams of emigration across the plains, sure of meeting many in this desert valley who were in need of the wares the trader carried. Flour would be the chief part of the load, of self-raising kind, the beans and bacon would be included. These freighters would drive north to the crossing of Snake River, trading wherever they could, and the prices demanded for their commodities would make a dealer in sacred relics ashamed of himself, for his modest charges. When sold out these freighters would return for another load. Their wagons would be stenciled "U. S. Q. M.," same as the caravans to and from the Missouri River, and drawn by four big horses.

On the return trip these teamsters made it a point to gather up all the things abandoned by

emigrants, and take them to Salt Lake City. To-day two of these caravans crossed our trail, going south. They were both loaded with about everything which could be piled on the first wagon, and trailing behind were long strings of wagons lashed together, which had been left by the wayside, abandoned by the owners, those having missing wheels or other principal parts gone would be loaded on a good one. They had gleaned the trail of everything, and had accumulated immense loads, property representing many thousand dollars. They had gathered up all the broken parts of the wagons, also, as a stick of hard wood represented a certain value in Zion. Every broken gun in sight had also been gathered in.

One train included the elegant barouche which had passed our train in such style on the Laramie plains. This had been abandoned and its occupants were compelled to secure passage with an ox train to continue their journey. When last seen the men of that party were plodding along in the dust, silent and dejected, and the ladies riding in a dead-ex wagon drawn by oxen. The horses of this elegant outfit had worn out early, as it was reasonable to expect they would, from the manner in which they were driven at the start, and were left somewhere on the road to die or become the prey to the gray wolves. The wagons and much excess private baggage which encumbered such a party on such a journey were left by the roadside also, the provisions being loaded on the wagons of emigrants, whenever it could be done, the owners being obliged to get in where they could secure transportation; a wretched and



TRAIN ON THE TRAIL.

used up expedition. To-day that elegant coach, with some of the varnish rubbed off, was on its way to the home of the saints, at no cost to the man taking it there. Many other fine carriages and wagons also were picked up and were towed down to where the saints abide.

The good plan of the emigrants to leave these wagons for those who may have crippled ones to repair from was thus made to be a source of enormous profit to those Mormon scavengers and beach-combers of the desert. The misfortunes of some of the human family are often turned to good account by others of the race; the losses of some are always the gain of others.

Those who, before starting on this journey, had arranged "sand bands" on their wagons—that is, a leather rim or band secured to the axle around the inside of a wheel hub to exclude the fine penetrating sand which grinds iron like flour of emery—were well protected for their careful forethought. Many wagons without these simple fenders were wearing out and failing because of the fine, gritty sand working into the hub, between that and the bearing, cutting the latter away and rendering the axle useless. Sometimes repairs were effected by taking an axle and a pair of wheels from an abandoned wagon, perhaps wheels alone, and of different size, and tracking differently from the rear wheels. Little note was taken of such small things as that; to get away from that horrible place was the chief concern of all.

Camp 63, August 15.—Morning dawned dull

and hazy; not long after it commenced raining. When the rain ceased, as it seemed to be clearing away, the caravan we had sought the shelter of during the night started out on the road, our company this time being in the rear. The engineers of last night's ridiculous performance were remarkably quiet this morning; they did not really know whether they had escaped being slain and scalped by Indians or had been instrumental in getting up a burlesque parade for the amusement of the party we returned to; so they kept quiet.

It soon commenced raining again, cold and penetrating, directly in our faces, and as it continued, increasing steadily, the entire train halted and aligned in the most convenient way to await its cessation; this did not occur until quite late in the afternoon, and then we moved on, and just before dark reached our deserted camp ground of last night, having lost an entire day and traveled fully twenty miles to regain the ground lost on this countermarching expedition.

At this point the roads again forked, one branch leading to the left, or westerly, crossing the south branch of Snake River and penetrating the Salmon River gold region, skirting the Snake River lava desert on the south, thence to Walla Walla and the Columbia River; the other going to the right or northeasterly, crossing the north branch of the same river, reaching the northern mining district, and thence through the Deer Lodge Prairie and Bitter Root Valley, intersecting the government military wagon road from Fort Benton, and then on to Fort Walla Walla from the north.

This latter trail the judge decided to take, as

there was better assurance of finding feed, wood and water. In length of route to reach our destination there was some material variation, but a longer line with abundant feed and water would in reality be shorter than one as badly supplied as that we had come over for the last three hundred miles. At this junction there was a breaking up of companies, as some in each were going different directions.

We parted with regret with some very agreeable companions; there were others we separated from with undisguised pleasure. Another train, one we had passed a day or two before, drove in after camp had been made, and located near us, thus making up one other considerable train bound over the northward trail.

The scenery on our midnight backward trip was something different from what we had been favored with before. The moon was obscured, but the firmament was brilliantly illuminated by all the starry hosts. Everything appeared under the magic spell of a midnight mirage; beautiful groves of green trees appeared to take the places of endless sand dunes; large buildings were revealed in dim but graceful outline, and mastodons and other monster animals were numerous, all showing in clear cut relief. There were wonderful "castles in the air"—phantom forms in that night of mystery—silhouetted against a quivering sky—and of spectres peopling the great throne room of the universe, of a mighty and incomprehensible power. That midnight tramp, while being needless and causeless, was in a measure

among atmospheric apparitions, weirdly charming and not wholly lost.

The mountains were wonderfully enlarged, while numberless sharp peaks pierced the heavens like temple minarets, reflecting from their gilded summits rays of subdued light from an unseen source; other tall spires, narrow at the base, seemed like polished marble. The scene was a beautiful illusion, and remarkable enough to attract great attention. To-day, in repassing over that same region, there was but little of interest to note; the mountains were just as distant and dismal as before, and the same old sand dunes and sage brush were conspicuously in evidence, while the whole aspect of the desert was as repulsive as ever it was, in its death-dealing influences.

One of the trails which branched off in this desert crossed the Port Neuf River, a few miles below. This river is a large affluent of the Snake. The trail passed a grand falls in the Snake River, known as the American Falls. Old plainsmen and packers who were encountered near the forks in the trail spoke of the falls as something majestic and worth an effort on the part of emigrants to go out of their way to see. Some of our party went to visit the falls, and returned full of abounding admiration for the beauty and isolated grandeur of the falls and the scenery above and below them. Those who did not make the trip were not envious, as it was a hard and tiresome excursion.

About one hundred miles further down the river to the west is another fall, said to be equal

to many which have been delineated on canvas and found favor in the eyes of lovers of the sublime, and to surpass others in the admiration of visitors. Because of its hitherto inaccessibility, added to the desire of pilgrims to push forward regardless of attractive scenery, it had been but little known up to the time of our tramp through the surrounding desert. That falls should be numerous and of great height, and cataracts and rapids frequent in the great affluents of, and the Columbia itself is but natural when the elevation of this plain is considered. Some tremendous plunges have to be made before the water can reach ocean level. We met with a number of adventurous spirits who seemed to be well informed in regard to portions of this infernal basin and the country generally.

It was very essential that clothing should be carefully attended to, for the wear was severe. Cloth to renew garments was often not to be had; so it came about that flour sacks—made of strong drilling—came into use for patches. These flour sacks were all printed “self-raising,” to indicate their contents, and it was amusing to see white patches of all sorts and shapes on trousers and jackets, and the self-raising legend conspicuously displayed on a prominent part of an emigrant’s anatomy—a place where a patch would do the most good.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Desert a Horrid Nightmare—Pretty Effects by Reflection—Fort Hall a Desert Ruin—Bewildered Emigrants—Lewis Fork, or Snake River—Ferrying the River—Catching a Mess of Fish—A Splendid Supper—A Blackfoot Indian Pilot—A Few Crow Indians Arrive—Some Lively Movements—A Drizzling Rain—Flour Cheap at Forty Dollars a Barrel—Fort Hall and the Valley of Same Name—A Bit of History—Rolling Lava Beds—Chapters of Horrors—Unpleasant Experiences and Memories—An Early Morning Indian Raid—A Company Robbed and Murdered.

CAMP 64, August 16.—Morning opened quiet and pleasant; the rain had cleared the atmosphere greatly, but the light air still rendered breathing difficult and unsatisfactory. The early morning promise of a warm day was fulfilled to the letter. The snow on the mountain peaks away to the north and also covering the peaks in the Wind River Range to the east reflected back a soft red color, making a brilliant artistic effect through the blue haze which enveloped them. The landmarks seen from here are not to be forgotten easily; the vast expanse of terrible desert, a horrid nightmare, extending everywhere with its accumulation of frightful memories, bordered on all sides by rugged mountains, is not the least

of them. The "Three Tetons"—woman's breasts—away in the distance to the north, rise up from the plains like three sentinels to watch and warn the weary pilgrim, while the Three Buttes to the west rising like shafts from the waters of the sea, fix themselves in the memory. The situation as thus revealed was a pleasant picture for the moment, but soon gave way to stern realities.

Old Fort Hall, just off the trail to the west, was a pile of ruins, long since deserted and fast passing away. The floods of the early season had very nearly succeeded in accomplishing what was left for time to do; that of completely obliterating all traces of this once important station. It had been a strongly built post of liberal proportions, and well fortified against Indians, and must have had an exciting history in early years.

Our traveling was shortened to-day in the course taken to reach the river, but in making the drive we crossed that part of the desert we had before turned back from. Two miles from the river we overtook a large section of a train which had left us several days before. It was in camp and its managers were uncertain what to do; the minds of the company were filled with doubt and harassed by uncertainty concerning the practicability of the unknown route they were entering upon.

Every man of the company appeared to be earnestly excited, and all talked at once, desiring to be heard and listened to; all sorts of fears were expressed of their reaching the haven they hoped for by taking the trail further north from here. Each man had his own notions and no amount of

assurance from those who had been over the trail or had other knowledge of it could convince him that two roads could reach the same destination. That company broke all to pieces, some deciding to go forward, others determined to go back and take the other trail, the one they had turned away from. When this separation commenced in earnest and camp began to break up, pandemonium reigned; clouds of dust at intervals along the backward track plainly indicated the locations of all sections of former companies.

In the meantime, our immediate train pushed on to the Snake River—the Lewis Fork—named for one of the early explorers of the Lewis and Clarke Expedition. At this point, the only available place where the river could be crossed, owing to its precipitous walls of rock, the ferry was established. The river at this point was about two hundred yards wide, with a deep and strong current. The ferryboat was not very large, and the process of ferrying in consequence was slow, and there was an immense amount to be done. Three dollars and fifty cents per wagon and stock was the price demanded for the crossing.

I went over early, and while the crossing was in progress selected a favorable spot and cast in a hook for some of the fish said to be in the river. I secured a fine string of trout, besides acquiring a robust appetite for the first fish caught on the whole journey of considerably more than one thousand miles. That night our company feasted on speckled beauties to their full satisfaction.

The owner of the ferry was a grizzled old frontiersman, for many years a trapper when the

entire interior of the continent was one vast paradise for hunters; he understood the Indian in all his instincts and actions; knew and was known by all the tribes for hundreds of miles around, and could talk nearly all their languages. He had married, or at least was living with, an Indian woman, and had a troop of swarthy half-breed children around his adobe cabin on the banks of the Snake. A number of Indians of an unidentified tribe were loafing around the crossing, all daubed with vermilion on their faces, feathers—perhaps other things also—in their matted hair, and enjoyed the possession of sea-beach watering place wardrobes. They all hovered around the trains and wanted to “swap” for “tobac” and “puff-puff.” The ferryman assured everybody that the Indians were his particular friends and that they were friendly to the whites. At the same time there was no inclination among our companies to relax vigilance.

One of these aborigines, when he saw that I was aiming to catch fish, piloted me to a favorite trout pool and caught the first fish; for his kindness, I gave him a linen line and half a dozen fish hooks, which pleased him greatly. He smiled at the gift—if ever an Indian can be said to smile—but his outward acknowledgment was a guttural grunt. While my redskin friend was with me a small party of Indians—three or four—rode down toward the river from the desert on the north, in full fighting armor, I judged. They gave a yell, such as Indians only know how to give, an outlandish, blood-curdling, oscillating kind, as they rode rapidly in. My companion did

not wait to say good-bye to me, but mounted his pony and plunged into the river and swam him to the opposite bank in short order. The newly arrived Indians, when they discovered this one making across the river and saw a numerous band on the opposite bank, turned and made off at high speed without delay in the other direction, back whence they came. It seemed that the ferryman's squaw wife and family friends were Blackfeet, and the new arrivals were Crows, and the two tribes were not at "amity" to any great extent, as the Interior Department officials would be pleased to say.

Before the ferrying was completed, it commenced to rain, drizzling for an hour or more; the sun was low before our trains could proceed. We climbed the steep bluff by doubling teams, the only way possible up the steep incline, and drove about two miles; and as it was then quite dark, we halted in the best place to be found and that was not saying much. The feed was good, but the sage was so high and thick that constant watchfulness was required to keep the animals from becoming tangled up in their lariats and so prevented from feeding. The sage was chopped away to make room to pitch the tent, and then the brush burned to drive out the intolerable mosquito which hovered around in myriads, thirsting for choice emigrant gore.

As we were still on the enemies' favorite battle ground, which abounded with Indians who had a great itching for taking "stock" in emigrant trains, we realized fully that eternal vigilance was the price of safety, as well as liberty;

the animals were all gathered in after feeding and picketed close to camp and a double guard set for the night. The enormous growth of sage, a forest in miniature, was an excellent thing to conceal sneaking Indians and enable them to gain our camp unobserved.

As our supply of flour was getting low, the judge, out of precaution, bought four sacks of the Salt Lake self-raising product—equivalent to one barrel—paying forty dollars therefor. That staple was known to be cheap at that time; it soon went up in the mining section to nearly one dollar a pound.

Fort Hall should not be understood as being a frontier military post; it was nothing of the sort. It was one of an endless chain of trading posts—or factories—established by the Hudson Bay Fur Company, when that concern, chartered by Great Britain, held practical possession of all the hunting grounds in the United States, as well as British America. When the United States came into full possession of the country west of the Rocky Mountains—the Spanish acquisition—American hunters were dividing the fur business of that mighty corporation, and when the animals began to disappear, the British Company gradually withdrew its lines to the north, ultimately beyond the 49th parallel, to British soil, abandoning all their American stations, Fort Hall among them; but this move was not made until about the last fur-bearing animal on American soil had disappeared, and further occupancy of this country was unprofitable. Among the Indians, the trappers, servants and factors of

the Hudson Bay Company were entirely safe, never being molested; with Americans it was otherwise. The Hudson Bay Company's servants uniformly had squaw wives and large half-bred families; this was a domestic condition encouraged by the chief factors of the company the better to hold their servants and secure peace with the Indian tribes.

When the United States assumed full authority over this portion of the continent, a large section immediately around Fort Hall was set apart as a military reservation, and a large portion of the plains adjacent was made an Indian reservation; an area larger than some entire states. West of this reservation was an immense domain designated as Snake River Desert, known also by explorers and emigrants who entered it unawares as the Rolling Lava Beds. The unsuspecting traveler soon learned what the dangerous labyrinths of lava beds meant. These lava beds cover thousands of square miles in area, extending from the Rocky Mountains to the Columbia River, and from Snake River beyond the boundary to the north between the United States and the British Possessions, and contain many extinct volcanoes.

After the Hudson Bay Company had been required to vacate the American possessions, it set up a claim against the United States for a fictitious value of these abandoned posts, demanding of the government five million five hundred thousand dollars therefor; Fort Hall was listed as about two hundred thousand dollars. Not one of the entire chain of stations was worth anything deserving of mention, the most of them having

been long abandoned and in ruins. A joint commission was appointed by the two governments, England and the United States, to take testimony on the question of values, demand and allowance. I had the pleasure of appearing before the commission at Olympia, Washington Territory, at its session there, by subpoena, as did several others, and testified to the abandonment and the utter destruction of Fort Hall by the action of the elements; it was stricken from the list of claims set up.

Through some sort of juggling, by methods known only to "joint high commissions" on claims, the Hudson Bay Company was awarded one million five hundred thousand dollars for some sort of "consequential damages," for something non-existing and intangible. It was a fraud on the United States, pure and simple, without a shadow of justification.

The Hudson Bay Company was chartered by the English Government in 1670, with the exclusive privilege of trading on the shores of Hudson Bay and its tributaries. The chief business of the company was trapping and trading in furs. It gradually extended its field of operations until it embraced every portion of the North American Continent where fur-bearing animals were found. On the Pacific coast, the company sought to hold land—which was forbidden in its charter—and under the name of the Puget Sound Agricultural Company tried to hold nearly all the available prairie lands in the territory operated in by its traders and trappers. That, however, the company had to relinquish. In 1762, just one hun-

dred years before our journey was undertaken, the French lost control of all its American and Canadian possessions.

Fort Hall was built for a trading post for an American Rocky Mountain trading and fur company, by a man named N. J. Wyeth, in 1834. It was securely built and capable of resisting any attack made by Indians, the red man could never get inside of its enclosure by force. As an American station it was crushed out of existence by the active opposition and hostility of the Hudson Bay Company; it remained in the possession of the latter company until the country became American possessions.

This item of history is given here as a fitting conclusion of the chapters of horrors detailed in this and the previous subdivisions of this story.

Fort Hall Valley—or desert properly—at the Snake River crossing has an altitude of four thousand five hundred feet. The mountains and peaks bordering the plain rise from three to five thousand feet higher, excepting the lofty Fremont's Peak, the great sentinel of the northern Rockies, and their crests are always among the clouds and covered perpetually with snow. But for all this elevation, the atmosphere under a pitiless midsummer sun shimmers and blisters with waves of prostrating heat. The soil around the old fort was generally good and provided pasturage sufficient for all needs when the station was occupied and a busy mart, and also hay enough to last through the long rigorous winters of that latitude.

Seventeen days ago we surmounted the crest

of the Rockies and crossed through South Pass down the Pacific Slope. They were days of extreme labor and toilsome traveling over roads that no pen description can give the reader an adequate conception of, and through deserts where trying and horrifying experiences hang like an aggravating nightmare over every human being who may have had the misfortune to travel over the same route. The nights were seldom better than the days, and all conspired to make a history no one cares to have repeated.

About the middle of the afternoon we came upon the scene where a serious conflict had taken place but a few hours previous. The ground for about an acre or more in extent was strewn with wreckage and remains of a train, and there was good evidence that a stubborn fight had taken place. Six horses were lying dead near by, some of their bodies containing arrows still remaining in them; all the animals had been also riddled by bullets. A number of sacks of flour had been cut open and the contents scattered over the ground; a considerable quantity of provisions were strewn around, kicked about and trampled by contending forces, while the charred remains of a freight or emigrant wagon was near by. A hastily written notice had been posted, giving brief particulars; the notice was pinned to a tree by a wooden peg, inserted in a hole made by a bullet. It stated all the facts obtainable, which were, that at an early hour in the morning of the day before a band of hostile Indians had swept down on a company of miners or packers, who had evidently all been butchered and their animals killed or stolen and

everything of the least value remaining after the fight carried away. One of the party was found who had been shot and scalped and left for dead. He had crawled behind some rocks and bushes to hide, and life enough remained when discovered to briefly tell the story of the savage raid.

A company one day ahead of ours had found this murderous evidence, and as it was strong enough to resist an attack if one had been made, it camped near the scene and buried the victims. Their party was entirely safe, as was ours, as Indians after a raid always move far away from the place, fearing reprisal. These burials had taken place on the morning of the day we passed the spot. It was a gruesome and horrible place, and we drove promptly away from the locality where the red devils had wrought such destruction, and camped at night a few miles away with no pleasant thoughts of what had taken place so few hours before.

The note contained the usual warning to all to be watchful and concentrate into strong companies if possible. No information was obtainable to indicate what tribe of savages had perpetrated this outrage. No one seemed desirous to secure one of those arrows as a memento of the place and the occasion. The struggle took place in a little sag on the top of a hill of considerable magnitude at a spot well covered with timber, not dense, and where there was scant underbrush. This affair was near enough to us to give very uncomfortable feelings for some days afterwards.

It had been our good fortune to be just ahead

or just behind all the Indian raids we had been apprised of up to this time, a matter of self-congratulation while feeling full sympathy with the poor victims of Indian atrocity.

CHAPTER XXII.

Ferrying a Tedious Job—A Special Favor Declined
—Continuation of the Sage Desert—The Three Buttes Distinct Landmarks—Difficult to Get Water—Sage, Cactus and Rattlesnakes—The Extremes of Human Misery—A Warning to Thieves and Murderers—Skull and Crossbones—A Flying Storm—Good Fishing—A New Cut-off—Rivers Sink and Reappear—Lakes Without Outlets—The Mosquito Torture—Mountains of Iron—Immense Sage Plains—Lonely Graves—Volcanic Evidence.

CAMP 65, Sunday, August 17.—Our party remained in camp until noon so as to enable the delayed trains to get over the river in the morning, and come up with us, and for allowing them time to feed and rest their stock, for there was no feed in the burning sands on the other side. When it became known to the owner of the ferry that Judge Hewitt, Chief Justice of the Territory in which he operated his ferry, was, with his company, awaiting an opportunity to cross the river, he lost no time in hunting out the judge and informing him that his turn would come whenever his wagons were ready for the crossing. This especial deference on the part of the ferryman was intended as a courtesy of course, but was not required, as our train—consisting of but three vehicles and thirteen mules, all told—was ready

and in line waiting. The judge had no intention of crowding any one out of the line, and did not, declining firmly this proffered courtesy. He insisted that every one was entitled to equal consideration.

The judge merely took his party on to the river without hesitation, and was therefore early at the ferry, passing many who were lagging behind and wrangling over the best route to venture on, as some still had but an indistinct idea of where they would ultimately go. We were off the long traveled trail, going into a region wholly unknown to emigrants, only plainsmen, explorers and detachments of military companies knowing anything about it, and they had left no record that was a guide for any purpose.

The ferry facilities were not equal to the emergency; the demand for crossing in good season was greater than anticipated, as the emigration along that northern trail was unusually heavy and unexpected. As a consequence, many had to remain on the south side of the river over night, without a spear of grass for hungry animals.

About one o'clock in the afternoon, after luncheon, that portion of the train which had come up in good season moved on so as to reach a camping ground better fitted for a large number of emigrants. Four wagons and the men belonging to the delayed part of the company remained behind to act as convoy; the other part of the train, twenty wagons, went on. This portion of the country was not deemed entirely safe for small companies, for no one was ever permitted to go into or come out of the Blackfoot domain without

paying more or less tribute in blood and treasure to that race of mountain bandits if the savage saw his advantage; his opportunity was seldom overlooked.

Our course lay directly up the Snake River over the same character of desert before described. The surface of the road was level and smooth, and the animals had no difficulty in getting over the ground to a good distance. The sagebrush banked on either side of the trail was tall and dense, making an almost solid wall; the brush had been cut out and removed to make this passageway. Only those who were in the saddle or were riding in the wagons could look over this sagebrush growth and survey its extent, and to them the plain was illimitable, and the view depressing. The cut was barely wide enough for an ordinary wagon to pass through; people on foot had to go ahead or trail behind through an awful cloud of blinding dust.

About the only thing to relieve the tedious sameness of the absolutely flat surface of this broad and barren area were the Three Buttes, which loomed up as distinct landmarks like the Pyramids from the desert along the Nile; the Buttes came to be spoken of affectionately. We were no nearer to them than on yesterday, only viewed them from another quarter. The atmosphere while we were going through the sage bed was very sultry; and the dust can hardly be fittingly described, it being strongly impregnated with alkali, was affecting everyone's eyes and lungs to a serious extent.

A good camp ground was finally found, where

the feed was abundant and good; fuel was sagebrush, but it was large enough to be called wood. Water was obtained with difficulty from the Snake River, which was down about two hundred feet between two perpendicular walls of rock. Two or three persons worked their way down to the water and filled buckets which others let down with ropes from the cliffs above, and then drew them up. It was a slow process, but it was the only thing to do. When this rock ribbed region was rent asunder to make a conduit for the Snake River the banks were not smoothed down by any means.

Towards evening all the delayed wagons reached camp and the party was reunited, the male part of the company aggregating about seventy-five men, a determined little army.

Camp 66, August 18.—The usual work laid out for Mondays generally required no little time to accomplish, and water was a necessary adjunct. This article was denied us in the usual quantity, as only by infinite labor could it be had. One could stand on a point of rock jutting out over the river and see the dark, strong current of the stream moving irresistibly onward two hundred feet below and trace the opening in the rocky surface for several miles up stream and down; yet one could almost exclaim: "Water, water everywhere, and not a drop to drink!"

A narrow and uncertain trail leading down to the river was found in the morning, where the stock was taken to drink, a few at a time. This path had evidently long been used by wild ani-

mals, as was clearly shown, and was probably the only way down to the water for many miles, and the wild animals had evidently discovered it. Up that devious trail water was "packed" for camp use.

Again was the weather oppressively hot, exhausting to man and beast. In addition to an almost super-heated, blighting atmosphere, as though belched from the open mouth of a seething furnace in regions infernal, one constantly



SKULL AND CROSSBONES.

breathed impregnated dust to a painful extent. We were still in the "Sage Desert of the Mountains," where everything was vile and fearful. The carcasses of horses, mules and oxen strewn along the highway was evidence that in those instances the animals had reached the limit of en-

duration. It would seem as though the extremes of human misery approached a climax in that vast interior furnace basin, where the air would almost sere the flesh; where lakes have inlets but no outlets; where rivers are engulfed in the sands, and where nothing is produced fit for man to use, and starvation and death are ever present apparitions following closely the footsteps of all.

A notice posted in an open space where it would be sure to attract attention warned lawless characters, especially thieves and murderers, that retribution, swift and certain, awaited them unless they departed immediately from the country or desisted in their criminal course; the notice stating also that four of this class had been tried and hanged a few days before a short distance from the spot where the warning was put up. The placard was decorated with a skull and crossbones to make its form the more impressive; the pencil drawing of the emblem of death was fairly well executed, equally as well executed, we hoped, as the outlaws mentioned. The location of the graves was designated, but we had no curiosity to hunt them up.

Camp was located a long distance from the river along a little creek, where the feed was good. Bunches of sagebrush do not make good beds, and it was necessary to remove many of them before sleeping arrangements could be concluded. A large company assembled at this place. For safety, the cattle of the whole camp were combined, and herded for the night, the guards acting in common.

Camp 67, August 19.—The trail marked out for emigrants followed the river for a long distance this morning, and then the Snake in its serpentine course took a long sweep to the southward, then northeast. Its course could be easily traced through the level reaches, but as the river along here has buried itself deep down in the bowels of the earth and created abrupt walls, which were effectual barriers against all attempts to approach it, there was little pleasure to be gained along its banks.

The river and the road came together where we wanted to camp, and it was a fine place with good willow brush for fuel and feed up to the ears of the cattle. Easy access was had to the water, and fishing was indulged in again by all who could separate themselves from other duties, and good strings of the speckled tribe were gathered in.

A few miles beyond this camp a long stretch of rough country begins, being a series of detached hills or, properly speaking, piles of broken rocks, heaped up in some convulsion of nature. The valleys at the foot of these hills were narrow and tortuous, and bad for wagon transportation. An old mountaineer who was acting as scout and pilot for a large freight train, destined for the mines, posted a notice to travelers, at a turnout, stating that he was out to discover a better and shorter road if possible, and the freighters were with him. Should he succeed in finding what he sought, a notice would be found at the turn-off, or he would blaze a guide for travelers; failing to send back notice, his track could be easily found and followed.

This matter was duly considered in council, and an early morning start decided upon so as to find the hoped-for road, as anything would be a relief; if not found then to have time to pass the wretchedly broken country by the old trail. Camp soon became quiet after this conclave; everybody was tired and needed all the rest possible to be obtained.

Immense deposits of black sand were of common occurrence along the Snake River, and gold had been found to exist in liberal quantities along its bed and banks. We were of the opinion at the time we encamped by it that the time would come when the hardy miner would exploit the Snake and its tributaries and gather an abundance of the auriferous metal, and that hills and valleys we have condemned as valueless, would, in a few years, be made to contribute their full share to the world's wealth. This belief was not prophetic exactly, but the sequel proved the faith to be well founded. When we were there, Indians were far too numerous and too troublesome to make the gold hunter's life a happy one.

None of the numerous streams and rivulets flowing from the mountains along the route we traveled for days found their way into the Snake River; they either formed numerous lakes, scattered over the valley, or sank in the porous soil only to reappear again at a point some way farther down the bed, flowing, as frequently demonstrated, not far below the surface. When one of these dry beds was encountered, a hole sunk two or three feet deep would usually soon yield water sufficient for a large party. The soil, if

such it can be called, was principally sand, porous and absorbing, and the water sinks easily enough until it meets a hard stratum which would force it to the surface again. It looked strange to see a train camp in one of these dry sandy river beds, and men start at once to sinking holes in a dozen places. But in a short time there would be water enough for all requirements, of very excellent quality usually, but occasionally brackish.

For sixty miles above old Fort Hall, along the main stream of the Snake, there was but one tributary to it from the south, and that the Little Blackfoot, before mentioned, while none reached it from the north, all of them sinking or ending in a marshy bordered lake. The scarcity of timber was noticeable, and the universal abundance of sage which gives the name, "The Sage Desert of the Mountains," extends many miles in width and length, a vast ocean of depressing desert, unbroken save by the Three Buttes in the distance. The whole great sterile plain was terrible in its desolation. Heaven help those who were ever overtaken by disaster in that inhospitable abode of all that is evil, and evil only.

Camp 68, August 20.—An early start was made this morning just as contemplated; this means that the train was on the road soon after day-break, and day dawns early in this altitude in August. The chief labor of preparing breakfast—in fact all meals, as also most of the laundry work—devolved on the ladies of the company, and in spite of the cold, nipping air and the total lack of all conveniences and comforts women are entitled

to by right, none of them complained, or in words expressed impatience at the duties devolving upon them, or deemed themselves imposed upon; tho on such mornings as this, it was very like an imposition to turn them out by 3:30 in the morning to get breakfast for twelve people, then have them wash and pack the dishes and utensils, and be on the road by 5 o'clock. But they looked unutterable things and one and all earnestly prayed that a deliverance from this vestibule of a satanic dwelling place and of horrid influences and memories might soon be obtained.

We were fortunate in finding the hoped-for cut-off. The new trail veered to avoid a swampy section, composed of numerous sloughs and muddy holes. The main trail went directly through this bad place. The wagon tracks—the only blazing possible—not being very distinct, a few drivers ahead, not noticing the new trail, went several miles around and out of their way, while the others took the shorter road. This unfortunate oversight separated the train for half the day and gave many of the animals much extra hard work. The cut-off even was not a smoothly paved highway by any means; and before we got through it we naturally wondered what the old trail could possibly have been.

We crossed several broad sloughs, and a swiftly running stream about ten yards wide, coursing through an expanse of soft and muddy bottom which had but a short time before been overflowed to a considerable depth. The overflow had left its legitimate product, myriads of active mosquitoes that hadn't feasted on blood for the

whole season, apparently, and were determined to make up for it. Every bush was loaded with them, and the winged clouds increased as we progressed. The animals suffered intolerably.

When the road touched the river, the trail was but a bed of deep sand. Over sand, sagebrush and rocks we went all day. The rocks were of volcanic origin, almost lava itself; they appeared to have been subjected to the influence of a fearful flame in some age of the world. Some large boulders were actually fused together as tho having been subjected to an hundred fold heated blast from an air tube; some fierce and awful force had swept over this plain and seared it as a deadly sirocco. Iron and copper indications were visible in many places.

In the afternoon we passed around the margin of a large lake, into which the creek mentioned emptied. The water of the lake was warm, had a bitter taste and was muddy some distance out from shore. The air was melting hot during the day; toward evening it became cloudy and boded a storm, a heavy wind bringing it directly down upon us from across the lake. The surface of the water became agitated in a wonderfully short time, whitecaps covering it completely, until they turned into waves which broke on the shore like ocean surf after a storm at sea, and then dashed in fury against the rocky shore, the spray was thrown high up, filling the air and appeared to be pure white soapy foam. We expected to get a heavy downpour of rain, but really received but a light shower, as the wind carried everything around with a centrifugal motion, actuated by

tremendous energy, completely encircling the lake, then passing off on the opposite side with a loud roar which was distinctly heard until it gradually died away in the distance. It was a beautiful sight to those of us who had stood near the beach and watched its commencement, progress and final disappearance. The maps call this body of water Market Lake. There was an old original trail around its eastern border, long unused, and which had now entirely disappeared.

Camp was made at the extreme end of this lake in an exposed place so the wind would drive away the ever-present mosquitoes, which it did effectually. Sage was unusually thick all around us; one stick was brought into camp, which measured ten inches in diameter, almost a tree; this shrub sometimes grows to a prodigious size. The wind continued blowing a stiff gale until late in the night; the mosquitoes in consequence were unequal to the task they had set themselves to accomplish, but they created havoc while they were at work.

As new as this trail was several graves by the wayside indicated clearly that people may not always choose a place to die and be buried in.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Remarkable Aerial Storm—Curious Conditions—A Lake with a Submarine Fountain—Tiresome Roads—The Three Tetons—A Few Skeletons of Bison—A Frontier Trial Court—Equal and Exact Justice—An Unnatural Son—A Mother Abandoned—Extra Judicial Persuasion—Giving the Ladies a Little Respite—A Poetic Inspiration—Snake Killing—The Deceptive and Cruel Mirage—A Terrible Experience—Lost River—Volcanic Storm Center—Vast Lava Beds—Extinct Volcanoes—An Accursed Region—An Infernal Abode—The Bannock Outbreak in 1878—General Howard's Campaign—A Bit of Indian War History—The First Wagon Over This Country.

CAMP 69, August 21.—A singular atmospheric phenomenon attracted attention this morning. It was a new and strange experience and excited attentive interest even in a region where unusual things are constantly occurring, so much so that many ceased to attract attention unless beyond the ordinary. The sun rose in unusual splendor, and everything remained bright, the horizon as far as could be traced was clear and free from shadow; this continued for perhaps an hour. Then almost directly above us a cloud suddenly appeared, at first "no bigger than a man's hand." The cloud on first appearance was a deep black, then changing to a rich royal purple, then showing

streaks or rays of light of varied prismatic hues, then again intensely black; meanwhile it was expanding rapidly, the elements above getting into violent commotion, the cloud becoming an immense canopy, whirling and rolling in the fiercely agitated air currents, a noise issuing from it much resembling that of a flock of birds swooping swiftly down and cutting their way against a heavy wind, with a whistling sound; again resembling the rattling grind of rapidly moving mill gearing.

As this magnificent conflict of the powers of the air neared our camp we thought the struggle of the journey with uncontrollable elements had come and hastily prepared for it as best we might; but as it approached in its furious anger the spot where we had parked it wheeled away as suddenly as it came, and after loudly repeating the sounds spoken of disappeared with a moaning noise; no one could account for the almost instantaneous disappearance, the electric disturbance vanishing from sight, leaving no sign. The storm, for such it certainly was, was all over in a few moments and the sun appeared as brightly as ever. It was a remarkable occurrence and we thanked fortune that it was up toward the shining stars and not down on the earth where we were.

Part of the forenoon was occupied in getting over the same sort of roads as those of yesterday, after which we cleared the sage desert, the swamps and the deep sloughs and drove out into a large meadow which was covered with a heavy growth of tall grass. This was coarse and fibrous, and while it seemed nutritious was not good for

feed. At noon we halted by the shore of a small lake, where the grass was soft and luscious. The water of the lake was clear as crystal and sweet. Some of the company improved the occasion by bathing in the lake, I among the number; it being warm near the shore a few of us struck out for deep water; out about fifty yards it was icy cold, the water seemingly rising from some subterranean fountain, as the circling current and big bubbles indicated. The uncanny look prompted the swimmers to pull for shore, which they did in haste; it was a refreshing exercise, however; but we learned all we wished to know about that lake in a very short time.

As to the road in the afternoon, it was the same old familiar story, deep with sand and tiresome to traverse. From a nipping air at early dawn to a sultry and stifling atmosphere at midday, with the sand blistering where it came in contact with the flesh, was a climatic transition which brought many discomforts in its train.

Early in the afternoon with the blazing sun high in the heavens we came upon a creek of excellent water, and with good forage, and there we camped. The teams had a heavy day of it and were jaded and needed rest; everybody was fagged out and irritable. After a good supper—and a meal to a hungry person will soften ill humor very quickly—a little time spent socially around a camp fire had a reviving influence.

Since crossing the Pass the bones of the bison were exceedingly scarce; evidently they had an instinctive knowledge of this region and shunned its deadly influences. To-day we saw a few of

their skeletons for the first time in many days; but they were old, having lain long in the sand and were bleached and weather worn.

The Tetons loomed up in view from this camp, like three graces, and the mountains in which they are situated made a pleasant background, but they looked dwarfed beside the surrounding and distant lofty peaks.

Our usual storm arose in the evening, a heavy wind blowing things about without regard to order or comfort. For safety camp fires had to be extinguished. The storm clouds were densely black, and the usual precautions were taken to secure the tent and wagon covers from injury; fortunately nothing serious happened. The thunder and lightning were fully up to the gauge originally set, noted before we entered the mountains, intense and heavy, but the rain in our vicinity was light, passing away early.

During the afternoon drive we passed a train which had parked temporarily on the way, for the purpose, as we were informed, of trying a man, a member of the company, for making a murderous assault on his traveling companion or partner. Every company took good care of such cases, and there was seldom an opportunity to secure a change of venue or take an appeal to a guess court on some hair-splitting technicality. That it looked serious for the accused there was little doubt, as the draught animals had been detached from two large wagons and their tongues, or poles, raised and the iron rings on the ends brought together, through which a rope had been reeved for a prospective hanging, a form of fron-

tier gallows sometimes made use of. Men of the party were discussing the matter in a serious manner, and that there was to be no trifling was evident. What the man was accused of we did not learn definitely, but drove on, minding our own affairs. "Non-interference" was far the safer policy in such cases. We learned afterwards that the culprit was found guilty, with "extenuating circumstances;" he was permitted to take a mule and some provisions and go his way with the admonition not to be seen around that train again.

Persons accused of horse stealing or murder on the frontier—and murder was generally considered the lesser crime, tho death was the penalty for both—when asking for a fair and impartial trial by a jury gathered on the spot, were always assured: "Certainly you will have a fair trial by your fellows, and you will be allowed to have witnesses and to defend yourself; but," it was always sententiously added, "you will hang at the end of the trial!" And they did hang. Frontier punishment in those days always fitted the crime, when the culprit was apprehended.

At the noon halt word reached Judge Hewitt that a man belonging to a train a short distance ahead of us had had some misunderstanding with his mother and had taken the oxen from her wagon, giving her a small amount of provisions and abandoned her by the roadside. As we were in Washington Territory, the judge thought a little extra judicial persuasion in such a case seemed justified, mounted a mule and rode ahead to make investigation. He found the facts to be as stated; the old lady was sitting in her wagon

by the roadside, in the shade of a few spreading trees, not a soul being near, the unnatural son having taken the family and driven away. The judge followed and overtook him, and after a brief interview convinced him that the safest course to pursue would be to return and get that mother and take care of her while passing through the territory of which the judge was a judicial officer. The gentleman thought so, too, after a little reflection; returned and took his mother and her wagon along with him and allowed no further fretful outbreak to prompt another desertion. The man and his family, it seemed, were destined for Puget Sound, as was the judge, and realized his brutal mistake. The whole family in due time reached the Sound in safety. The mother afterwards married and lived many years near Olympia.

Camp 70, August 22.—Started out at a reasonable hour this morning, giving the ladies ample time to get through their regular tasks without the "make haste" order, which occurred with uniform regularity nearly every morning. Everything went smooth and as agreeable as surroundings could favor. Crossed the creek first thing and followed it for some distance, and when the trail left the creek we struck out over the desert through the deep sand without the least idea where it led.

Some willows and aspens fringed the creek in some places, and all who had the privilege of walking accorded them cut stout willow sticks for canes; they proved of great utility a little later on.

The words of Whittier came to mind involuntarily:

"We cross the prairies as of old the pilgrims crossed
the sea,
To make the West as they the East the homestead
of the free."

The surroundings did not justify much indulgence in sentiment or poetry, but this familiar quotation came up spontaneously. A number of footmen started out ahead of the train, expecting to reach a stream which could be seen in the distance, plainly aligned by a growth of trees reaching a long way on the border of the plain, and there take a good mid-day rest; this tramp was the beginning of our misery on that day, tho we did not fully realize it until later on. The deep sand for a few miles made wretched walking, but when the road was over-firm ground we quickened the pace to reach water, which apparently ran in a beautiful river, but a short journey ahead.

Entertainment was had by killing rattlesnakes along the way, many of the cold, slimy things having crawled out in the morning to warm up in the sands of the road. Our good willow sticks were useful in this warfare, and many a reptile was stretched along the trail so the drivers and other members of the party might see and count them if it pleased them to do so. Few reptiles escaped when once they were seen. But that river was no nearer at eleven o'clock than at seven, and we began to endure excruciating misery for the want of water. It was a mirage that was leading us along, one of those wonderful atmospheric

pictures in desert lands by which we were being deceived. The sun poured its most intense rays down without a breath of air moving to mitigate the heat; tongues began to thicken and walking became difficult. The road seemed to come up out of a bright pool of water behind us and lead down into another just ahead, appearances which ever lead on to destruction. There was not a drop of water with that party of thirty or more men; every canteen was dry; not a word was spoken by any of the party, but every man looked his anxious desire and fears.

Without realizing the situation or knowing the character of the country before us we found ourselves in the great interior lava beds, the terror of emigrants, the most inhospitable of all the mountain regions of the continent. Guided by that deceptive mirage we had pushed on with courage and hope for the one great longing—to reach water—and were led straight into that awful place; there was no passing by on the other side. The trail lay through this expanse of lava which was just as nature, in a fiery mood, had thrown it up, walled up straight on either side of the way, as true as tho made by the cunning hand of man, and leveled and paved with basalt, and cleared for a wagon road. On every hand as far as could be seen when opportunity was given to look over this scene of desolation, as far as the eye could penetrate, there was nothing but banks of lava thrown up in fantastic forms like the waves of a troubled sea. The Three Tetons were the only elevated points to be seen.

The fierce glare of the sun was so nearly direct-

ly overhead that one cast no shadow on the sand; the wretched surroundings made traveling almost unbearable. Throughout that region there are numerous craters and extinct volcanoes—great breathing holes in the past of the infernal regions—but having exhausted themselves at a time beyond the commencement of Indian tradition—always sufficiently distant and vague—and the conclusions of man, they were now powerless and silent.

Through here nothing could remain long and live, except its natural tenants, the rattlesnake, the scorpion, the lizard and the horned toad, which darted out of sight when we passed along. It seemed as tho the curse of the Almighty rested on this desolate region, and that it was not intended even that man should pass through it; that it should be sealed forever, closed from intrusion. To the south the Snake River coursed for leagues, so deep down and so inaccessible that the famished traveler is almost forbidden its waters; smaller streams sink beneath its ashy surface and are lost; across the desert to the north and west is Godin's, or Lost River, and when one toils through the blistering sands to find, on reaching its desolate banks, that there is no water in it; that, weary and disheartened, he has only dead sea apples for all his toil, one's hope sinks like the waters of the river, and the courage of the stoutest heart fails at the realization.

When the river is reached—what a maddening mockery to call such an approach to a place which conjures up in the fevered imagination the abode of devils and fiends incarnate, a river—one can

only think of the Styx, and the end of all things of earth and involuntarily turns in search of the invisible ferryman to take him to the other shore. One's sufferings from heat and thirst can hardly be described, and but dimly realized by those who have not endured them in such a region, approaching the storied agony of a lost soul in perdition; it is but a slight stretch of the imagination to smell the fumes of burning sulphur and all other diabolical substances, and expect a visit from the demons from the regions of the damned. That little band had an experience in that fearful region on that day which will cling to memory while life remains.

But there could be no hesitation, no time to search for things supernatural; water must be had at the end of the tramp, or death in its most horrid form was close at hand, and the end inevitable.

We crossed the sandy bed of Lost River—as dry as a powder magazine—and climbed to the low bank on the opposite side, when at a little distance beyond, around which seemed to be a bend in the river, if the mirage had ceased its fateful work, there was an appearance of green trees. The beds of lava had given way to sand and alkali dust, the river marking the line; we pushed on and finally, about two o'clock in the afternoon, the road descended a few feet into a little valley and there indeed was a stretch of green trees in actual existence half a mile ahead. This fringe of trees was below the horizon of the mirage, the valley where they grew being considerably lower than the lava plane.

We quickened our pace as best we could, and reached the river, only to find its sandy bed again as dry as an ash heap, the air palpitating like furnace heat waves. Hope for the second time sunk in every heart; after resting a few moments in the shade we realized fully that this in both places was the same stream and was one of the sunken rivers so numerous in the desert, so the company divided, some to go down the dry water course, some up, the worst used up ones to stay at the road crossing. The first party finding water was to shout, if they could, or shoot pistols to attract the attention of the others. I was with the party that went up stream. About eighty rods distant from the first point reached we found the river running as pure and rapid as could be imagined, but spreading out and disappearing in the gravelly bed at our feet.

It did not take long for the others of the party to get where the water was found, and men and dogs did not stop to select places to drink, but plunged in regardless of everything, and drank to their fill. The tree growth was cottonwood, willow and aspen, all deciduous; and the waving of their branches in a gentle wind made sweet music on that occasion, while our exhausted party rested under their delightful shade.

A detail was sent out to attract the attention of the mules and to steer them to the right place; but the mules had scented the water from afar, and were making for it with all the speed they could; they, too, pushed right in without allowing the drivers time to stop and unhitch. It had been the most serious experience we had without wa-

ter on the journey, as it certainly was the most deceptive mirage we had encountered with all its attractive but perilous illusions. The unsuppressed gaiety with which that party of men started on their tramp in the morning was changed to something almost a tragedy before night. Malediction accompanied any reference ever after to that infernal region.

The frightful condition of the universe when volcanoes belched flame and fury from subterranean furnaces and engulfed half a continent, perhaps half a world, with an overwhelming flow of melted stone and iron, passes comprehension and cannot be conceived, much less described. That a withering tempest such as would shake a world had exhausted itself here was more than probable, leaving a visible record that will interest those who wish to study it as long as the earth revolves.

We halted at this river long enough to allow the animals to graze and rest. While waiting here some of the party gaining strength and courage enough went prospecting in the river sand; the "color" was found in every pan of washings, and that was all.

The roads in the afternoon were a decided improvement, tho in spots where the bed rock which underlies the whole plain comes to the surface, the road was rough and jolted the wagons terribly.

Camp was located on the bank of a creek by the foot of a snow-capped mountain, a spur from the Gros Ventres range. The creek was deep down between vertical banks and water was with diffi-

culty obtained. It was known as Highbank Creek, tho Deep Cut Creek would have seemed to be more appropriate. A large cave near by was exposed to view by a portion of the roof breaking in. The cavern did not present attractions enough to prompt an investigation as to its extent.

To enable the reader to get a better understanding of this lava bed region of the interior basin, which was probably when the earth was new the volcanic storm centre of the North American continent, once gleaming with countless volcanic fires, tho briefly and inadequately described here, it might be instructive to trace its general outline on a map embracing the country west of the Missouri.

This volcanic region covers a considerable portion of Eastern Oregon, something of Nevada and Utah, stretches south through Arizona to and beyond the Mexican border, spanning the whole of Southern Idaho, bearing northward into Montana and over the borders of the Yellowstone Park, in Wyoming; a vast area, a very empire in itself, and, for the most part, practically uninhabitable. Detached beds of lava and great piles of molten rock are found to the northward in isolated sections, but frequent enough to be the result of a universal convulsion, extending over the boundary into the British Possessions.

The most rugged and impassable of these masses of molten rock and earth are, perhaps, found in Eastern Oregon; there the springs and sources of water supply were dried up or sunk and by some convulsion of nature the water courses were turned aside and now run far away

from what were once their natural channels. About the only water to be had is in pools formed by melting snow, and they, too, disappear at night when the sun goes down. In Idaho, the lava beds are generally more level and passable; wagon roads and trails traverse them in many directions. What is not great beds of lava piled up with the utmost confusion is fine sand mingled with ashes, strongly impregnated with alkali—potash concentrated by subterranean furnace fires. Here also a scarcity of water is often the cause of intense suffering to those who find it necessary to cross the inhospitable locality under a burning summer sun.

This immense region has always been the favorite resort of savages, numbering among them large bands from a score of powerful tribes, when they start out on marauding excursions and for fifty years previous to our overland expedition a bloody conflict had been waged between the Indians and the hunters and trappers of the American and Hudson Bay Fur Companies with ever-varying fortunes, giving a deep crimson coloring to the gruesome history of the locality. Even this region does not include the lava beds in Eastern Oregon, the scene of the Modoc uprising and butcheries in the early seventies.

It was through this sulphurous region that General O. O. Howard pursued the treacherous Bannocks in 1878, when they started out on the war path and commenced their favorite entertainment of murdering settlers and devastating the country. General Howard had not only the infernal natural obstacles to overcome in a region

where every spring of water was dried up in June or was a leached pool of alkali poison, but he had an indifferent War Department to contend with that hampered him for want of transportation facilities, and he also had the open, pronounced hostility of the peace-at-any-price societies of Indian worshipers in the east. But the General severely punished the murderous redskins and drove them to a hospitable retreat on British soil, and never afterwards did these savages gather courage to renew the war on the emigrants or settlers.

The first wagon ever known to pass over that route and cross the mountains to the north was taken over by Father de Smet, in 1844, the Roman Catholic pioneer missionary who passed a long and upright life laboring among the Indians. He was a man of wonderful fortitude and presence and was an influential power with the Indians and did much to open the way for white settlers in the mountain regions.

The Lewis and Clarke exploring expedition, of three years' duration, from 1804 to 1806, inclusive, passed through this lava bed and sage desert region, and the hardships and privations that company endured while within its sterile and inhospitable confines could only be survived by men of determined will and iron constitutions. It was a trackless waste at that time, never having been previously penetrated by white men so far as known. These hard adventurers had only the instinctive knowledge that the Columbia River and the Pacific Ocean were to the west of them, following the compass to keep their bearings.

The map made by those intrepid men was a valuable contribution and reasonably accurate.

At a later period Captain Bonneville, of the U. S. Army, traversed the same desert, part of his exploration being in the dead of a severe winter. The exposure and sufferings of this company was something almost beyond belief. The captain was on leave of absence, but went out in the interest of a company of men who desired to exploit the trading possibilities of the unknown interior and to hunt and trap for furs, as also to learn the habits of the Indians and their mode of life. Washington Irving wrote up the Captain's notes in a graphic and elaborate manner under the title of "Adventures of Captain Bonneville." Irving's graceful style of handling the facts supplied, and in depicting the terrible experience of the party, render the volume a standard contribution to the knowledge of that part of the forbidding world.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Brothers Quarrel—Almost a Tragedy—A Peace Maker Appears—Serious Affrays Reported—People Left to Starve—Deceptive Atmospheric Conditions—Service Berries a Luxury—A Fertile Plain—Extinct Volcanoes—Farewell to Fort Hall Valley, the Fearful Sage Desert—Climbing the Rockies Again—Camp on the Summit—High Altitude—The Wonderful Yellowstone Region—An Exhilarating Atmosphere—A Magnificent Sunrise—Nature Redeeming Herself—Camp on the Eastern Slope—A Villainous Serenade—Descend to the Yellowstone River—Thousands of Buffalo Skeletons.

CAMP 71, August 23.—The whole camp was thrown into a high state of excitement this morning, during the breakfast hour, which for a time marred the peace of the entire company and came dangerously near resulting in another violent desert tragedy. Two brothers, both young men, belonging to a large Missouri train traveling with ours, became engaged in a wordy wrangle over a trivial affair occurring at their breakfast table. Words increased in heat and turned into oaths, until one drew a large knife and viciously threw it at the other in a burst of uncontrollable anger. The knife missed its intended mark, the brother's heart, as he dodged the blade; it struck his back, however, cutting through the clothing and graz-

ing the skin; as he ran out of the tent, the imitation disciple of Cain jumped for and grabbed up the knife, shouting with a fearful oath that he would kill his brother, and a race for life or death ensued. As they ran past our tent, the one pursued grabbed our ax and a battle to the death seemed imminent.

At the right moment a man appeared and seized the now infuriated would-be murderer and choked him almost into insensibility, certainly into meek submission, besides cuffing him well; he then disarmed him, taking away both knife and revolver and informed him that he was under arrest and gave a little practical advice, at the same time assuring him that just one more such demonstration would secure him the distinction of being the principal in a plains hanging party, and very promptly. The surly fellow soon after mounted his horse and rode away; he kept aloof from everybody in the company for two or three days and finally disappeared, much to the relief of all, for had he remained in the company he certainly would have gotten into difficulty that would have had a more serious ending:

The gentleman who interfered and settled this matter was a man already noted among his associates on their journey as the "peace maker." He was a large, handsome man, with a pleasant countenance, muscled like a gladiator, but kind to everybody; men of his build are always good natured and fearless. He had occasion to exhibit his muscular development several times within the two months previous, and the recipients of his favors had no pressing desire to

second interview. The very presence of such a being works a hypnotic charm whether within or without the pale of civilization. Members of several companies had good cause to revere his memory. I only regret that his name slipped my notes and recollection.

This affair commenced in a tent very near ours, so close that all was heard by our company, and much of the disgraceful performance was within a few feet of our tent door. The effect on all within hearing was very unpleasant, tho we were becoming hardened to rough scenes. The quarrel arose over the use the offending brother had made of the other's tin coffee cup, he having taken it to dip sugar out of a sack for the table. I could not help thinking "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth;" and it is ever thus.

Serious affrays in some company were reported with circumstantial particulars almost every day; families were broken up or forbidden traveling in connection with early associates; husbands and wives separated in anger; brother arrayed against brother; individuals having no or but partial ownership in outfits had been turned off to seek company, transportation and camp privileges elsewhere and a spirit of satanic evil seemed to have full sway. The labor and wearying trials of such an overland journey bore just as heavily on one as on another, and none escaped the heavy burden; but ugliness apparently developed in some individuals to a worse degree than in others, and evil natures seemed to be under no restraint. Whatever irritability or downright cussedness is instinctive in human nature is sure to find a way.

out under circumstances engendered by a journey of months and miles over arid deserts.

A story came up to-day from a company on the trail in the rear a day or two, of a fracas in which a man having a large family was severely handled and stabbed. He became so abusive towards all his associates and so unbearable in his conduct that he was warned to quit the company he was traveling with. This led to a conflict, which resulted seriously as stated. He and his family, including several children, were then refused further association with the company, and were left by the side of the trail to face starvation or the tender mercies of savages, if not out of pity taken in by another train. This was another case, in its incipient stage, of division of labor and a short supply of provisions at the start, and improvidence all the way. Such cold-blooded inhumanity made one shudder and wonder where those people sprang from who could leave their kind in a region such as this, to a fate infinitely worse than death. It was impossible to learn anything about this family trouble afterwards. It was unpleasant to inquire into what was taking place before, behind or around us, there was so much of real tragedy in it all.

When our train started out in the morning we imagined we were close to the mountains toward which the trail was leading. The atmospheric conditions made distances very deceptive, and it was noon before they were reached. The train followed the creek where the last camp was located. Near the mountains the creek sheared to the east; our road was almost due north leading

into a cañon which went entirely through the range. The trail to the gap was up a gentle slope the whole of the forenoon; along on either side were acres of service berries; a generous quantity of the fruit was gathered and eaten with substantial relish. Along the trail for two or three days there were fertile places on which were growing in luxurious profusion wild oats, rye and wheat, and flax was mixed with everything else that grew. The flax was partially in blossom and made a pretty floral display. I gathered some of the rye, having stalks six feet in height; but of course it was not headed out as when cultivated; so with the oats and wheat, the grain being wheat, tho' the straw was rich forage for the animals. The wild locust weed was found here in great profusion.

As we neared the mountains, the rocks along the way, covering the slope as far as could be traced, were of a varied kind, a porous or honey-combed sort of basalt, granite boulders half melted, and on every hand abundance of lava, pumice stone and volcanic glass, or obsidian, unquestionable evidences of volcanic action; everything has been at a quivering white heat in this region in ages gone. Charts indicate extinct volcanoes in many places; there was evidence enough on every side to establish the theory that volcanoes caused the whole upheaval here.

As we approached the cañon mouth, which was not near the formidable place, it appeared at a distance, we turned and waved an adieu and a long but not an affectionate farewell to Fort Hall Valley and all the wretched memories connected

TETON VALLEY





with its expansive desolation and barrenness, and its hundreds of nameless graves; the lingering nightmare was over, and without a thought or anticipating a fear of what other hardships awaited us on a half-completed journey, all felt relieved that the Sage Desert and the terrible lava beds were things of the past.

The cañon soon opened into an elevated plateau, and after a reasonable drive we found ourselves again approaching the summit of the Rocky Mountains, recrossing the great divide, where the water starts from a narrow ridge and finds its way to the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. As the range of mountains takes a great bend to the west, we had necessarily to cross them the third time in the course of our journey back to the west flank. The headwaters of the Salmon River gather volume in the mountains near this pass, to the west; that river was one of the famous gold-mining regions of the earth.

The Missouri River receives the drainage of everything east of the Rockies; the Columbia takes everything on the west slope except the streams in the Green River basin and the affluents of Great Salt Lake.

Within a few hours, comparatively speaking, we crossed, in all their varied ramifications, the headwaters of two great rivers, the Missouri River on the east flank of the great continental chain of mountains, the Columbia on the west; the main Columbia drainage basin we had yet to reach.

We made but a short drive in the afternoon, as an excellent camp ground was found almost on

the top of the Rockies, and it was determined to spend the Sabbath there.

Pine wood served for camp fires and pine and cedar boughs for mattresses on which to sleep, a luxury not to be sneered at.

Sunday, August 24.—The duties and amusements of camp life on the plains during Sundays were simple enough, but served to keep most of the company fully occupied. To-day it was as usual for the women—washing, mending, cooking, baking, while the men repaired wagons, mended harness or chopped fire wood. Some brought out greasy, well-thumbed cards and sought shady places to indulge in innocent seven up, cribbage or euchre.

A few read "light literature" if a volume or two of State Department reports, or "Messages and Documents," which had been rescued from the mud holes in the Platte Valley and brought as far as this, could be so described. Others went hunting, but as perhaps a thousand other hunters had preceded them in this same locality, the crest of the Rocky Mountains, there was little game to be found. A "fretful porcupine" was all the trophy secured. But few birds were to be seen and they were small and shy.

Saturday was an extremely sultry day, but at night it became chilly and a keen frost came before morning.

The altitude of the mountains where the trail leads is something more than seven thousand feet, but there was little to indicate that it was the continental backbone, the rise being gradual. Peaks

to the east, in the great expanse toward the Missouri, and to the westward in the Stony Mountains—as the Rockies were once called—rose up among the fleecy clouds, and their snow enveloped tops could be seen for a hundred miles and more; distant ranges to the north and east, of lower altitude, presented a dark and somber appearance, many abrupt openings marking the great chasms where coursed the waters of great rivers through cañons closed to any kind of navigation. Probably there is no point along the whole range of mountains reaching from the Gulf to the British boundary where a more extended and comprehensive vision is unrolled before the beholder.

Down below, but miles away, were the Yellowstone valley and lake, which trappers and packers, as also a few wandering adventurers we had met in the lava beds and sage desert of the Snake River region, had assured us were situated in the midst of the most magnificent and entrancing region to be found on earth; where everything in nature was on so grand a scale and so wondrously beautiful that the imagination could hardly comprehend the overwhelming attractions. By the stories told the land before us was for half a century the paradise of hunters and trappers in summer, fur-bearing animals of every kind seemingly drifting into the lovely valleys, actuated by something more than instinct; and that its arctic features in winter could hardly be described.

This and much more we had been told by different ones, in a disconnected way, to all of which we listened incredulously, deeming the recital but camp fire entertainment, the idle fancy of men

who had, like ourselves, been for days laboring and suffering in the continental lava regions, and noted it as an exuberant expression of pleasure to come, to inspire courage to hasten on toward the beauties awaiting us; they were too enthusiastic, we thought, to be entirely reliable, partaking of the exaggerated scale old mountaineers loved to discourse in.

This was about all we knew in advance of the famous Yellowstone region, and but few, beyond the hunters and plainsmen referred to, knew any more. It was long after our visit that the wonders of the great park became known. That cantonment on the summit of the Rocky Mountains, on the Yellowstone meridian, was the most satisfactory and pleasing of the entire journey, in the foreground of a picture which remains in the mind as indelible as if spread on canvas.

Camp 72, August 25:—All the companies seemed to be of one mind this morning and proceeded quietly with the work of preparing to break camp to renew the march, loth to leave the locality where everything was conducive to rest. Remained in camp seventy-one about forty hours, and the effect of the long rest in the exhilarating atmosphere, so much nearer the stars than we had usually lodged, with pleasant surroundings, was productive of much good to everything, strengthening to man and beast. It was nine o'clock before the train was mobilized and got in motion. The air was clear, cool and bracing to the lungs, freighted with a balsamic odor from the pine and fir trees. These trees were not

growing thickly together and appeared to be very young or stunted in their growth, as they had not attained a height of more than forty feet, being, principally, much less than that.

The evidence of sunrise was apparent some time before the orb of day came into view, but when Sol rose up it was with wonderful splendor. For more than an hour before the sun appeared in its full glory, rays of light shot up from behind the lofty peaks, illuminating the firmament with a warm and radiant glow, gilding the lofty peaks—to allow the term—with purple, silver and gold. The atmosphere was dry and pure so that distances were exaggerated and objects magnified. When we would ascend a ridge or round a point, bringing an unobstructed opening vista was something beyond words to paint, so vast, so grand, so beautiful; but once on the march, with material affairs to demand attention, there was little time to note and admire a horizon beautified by rainbow colors so intermingled as would cause a landscape artist to turn from his paints and his easel in despair. Not a storm cloud within a hundred miles to obscure the vision.

Every turn the road made, every spur we rounded, revealed new beauties, greater magnificence, more mountain filled landscapes, that would elicit constant exclamations of admiration.

The descending valley we traversed during the forenoon was a great sag in the mountains covered with a growth of dwarf timber and a variety of shrubs. Thousands of pretty little flowers adorned the way as tho smiling a return for the

other beauties of nature on every hand. The soil was of a dark rich color, very fertile, as vegetation showed; grass grew luxuriantly, and considerable patches of the wild grains of the interior were scattered around. Small wonder the bison and all other herbivorous creatures sought this region where nature was no prodigal with all her attentions.

The mountains are quite regular in formation, rising grandly but proudly. The Red Buttes on the west side of the trail were passed in the forenoon. They are a cluster of peaks, of a grayish red cast from which comes the name, and are the highest peaks in the particular chain of the mountains we were now among. Numberless lesser peaks came into view, but no means was at hand by which they could be identified by name.

The noon halt was at the point which may be denominated the exact summit, and there bubbled out of the earth a cool spring of excellent water. A few water-worn pebbles were gathered as souvenirs of that summit visit. The road as it descended down the eastern slope—more properly speaking, perhaps, I should say the northern slope, the trend of the mountains being so abruptly to the west—was an easy grade with good wheeling nearly all the way. The appearance of the valley was even more tempting than the extension on the other slope. Not knowing what other pilgrims or explorers of our kind may have designated the place, we called it Pleasant Valley, and it fully merited the title.

Camped in good season in the evening about half way down the grade, by a fine little moun-

tain stream, which is one of the innumerable branches, or runs, which ultimately find their way to and contribute their portion toward making up the volume of the Missouri River.

Half a mile below camp and a little distance from the road the creek formed a large, deep pool, which was fairly stocked with trout, but owing to the lateness of the hour, when this discovery was made, none of the finny tribe could be coaxed to take the hook, very much to the disappointment of all.

The distance traveled to-day was estimated to be twenty-five miles, more than an average day's drive. Half the way being down grade and the road good, accounted for it. It was a late hour before all the train gathered in and camped.

Coyotes and wolves were out serenading nearly all night, I judged, and their baying, barking and snarling added nothing to the peace of mind of those who required rest after a hard day. The sharp, snapping bark of the sneaking coyote being so different from the deep baying of the gray wolf that their separate locations could be fixed without trouble. Several times the mules roused up and looked intently in some direction as though they could scent the wild beasts and now and then a mule would send back an answering bay. The echoing of these concerts was almost continuous, loud or faint, as the sound was near or distant, and then floated off into a cañon or around a ridge; it was near daylight before the villainous noises ceased. It was an orchestra sadly out of tune.

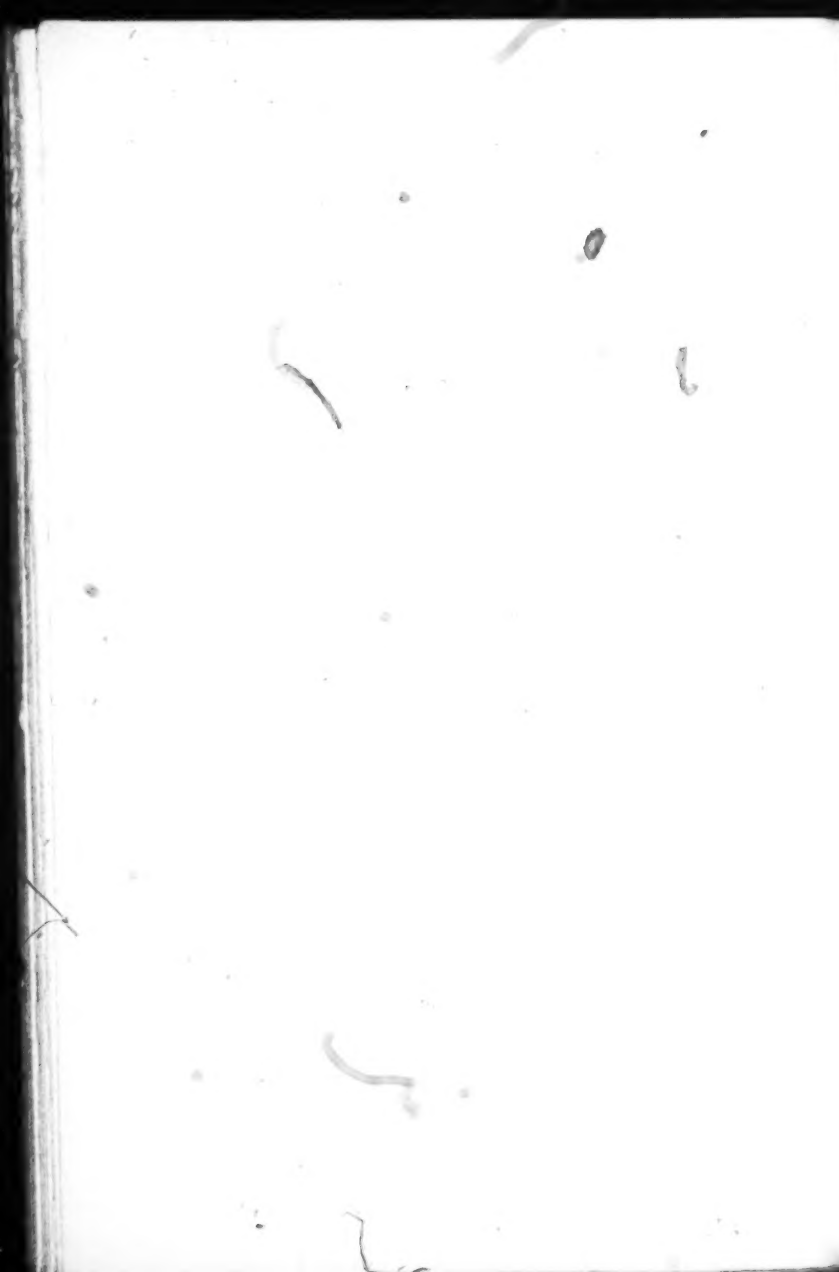
Camp 73, August 26.—An early morning start enabled the entire train—to be more exact, all the trains, for there were three or four traveling in company—to cover a good distance to-day. Until midday the trail was generally an easy down grade, part of the way following along the crest of a ridge which separated two little streams. Before reaching this ridge, the trail took a bend around a mountain spur, crossing the point of it. This spur was covered with a heavy growth of dwarf timber and a dense underbrush, the road being heavy with dust. After this point was surmounted there was no further obstacle. The foot of the ridge evidently was the average level of the valley we had reached. The drive during the afternoon was an easy up grade all the way.

The mountains were not rough and torn, as many were which had been crossed earlier, but entirely bare of timber of any kind on either side of the trail. At a distance there was a somber appearance to the top of the ranges as tho heavily timbered. The table lands were gravelly and dry, and the grass parched and almost worthless for stock feed.

From the sharp point of one prominent ridge, another view was had of a great area of diversified scenery, of valley and plain, tall peaks and snowy ranges; and down in the valley to the east we came nearer than before to a beautiful sheet of water, which glistened like burnished silver. It far exceeded anything of the kind seen on the whole journey. Being without chart or map—a compass our only guide—we had no means of locating it, but from descriptions given by the



CAMP IN THE COTTONWOODS.



travelers referred to, no one could mistake that gem; it was Yellowstone Lake. The whole cavalcade stopped, to rest limbs weary from exertion, and rest the mind by a contemplation of one of the sublime manifestations supplied by indulgent nature.

A smaller body of water to the west of the trail, which could be dimly outlined among the mountains, buried up at the foot of the everlasting hills, was Shoshone Lake, another gem in the Yellowstone diadem. It was with no feeling of extreme pleasure that we ascertained several days after this interesting march down the east flank of the mountains, that we had been traveling almost entirely across what was afterwards set apart by Congress, and became known as the Yellowstone National Park, in ignorance of the wonders; but the engineers who traced and blazed an emigrant wagon trail over this portion of the continent, sought the easiest passages their instruments guided them to, and passed around and avoided nearly all the wonderful beauties of this region.

In the afternoon we forded the main branch of the Yellowstone River. It was about one hundred yards wide, and averaged two feet deep and as clear as crystal. It wound along between banks hardly three feet above its surface, and was shaded by tall pines on both sides and groves of spreading cottonwoods. No lovelier spot on the green earth could be found than around the place where we crossed that beautiful river. Nature seemed to have determined on making ample amends for the wild abominations which had been thrust upon us for so many days of weary toil,

and so guided us to the crossing of the Yellowstone River. A second crossing of the river was much the same as the first. No pictures given by visiting travelers descriptive of these gardens of beauty were overdrawn.

The roads for the day were about all that could have been asked, rolling sometimes, but usually smooth; in the afternoon a little up hill; the scenery on every hand constantly developed something new and magnificent enough to draw especial attention. Singular rock formations in many places made valleys appear like parks rudely ornamented with monuments chiseled cunningly by elements not under human guidance. The immense number of buffalo skulls and bones strewn along the wayside to-day indicate that in years past this was a great feeding region for bison and a famous hunting ground for the Indians, as also, perhaps, other hunters; it may have been, also, a resort for the gangs of gentlemen butchers who used to shoot buffalo by the hundred just for the pleasure of boasting of what they had done.

Camped in the evening by a small creek from which it was difficult to obtain water sufficient for required purposes; enough was secured for the stock by sinking holes in the sand in the bed of the little run, and permitting them to fill by filtration, which was a slow process. Feed was fair, wood was scarce; this immediate section was barren of timber; the universal sage being small, it took much hard labor to prepare enough of it for a good fire.

It seemed a little strange, when the subject was spoken of in the evening, that no snow was seen

on the summit of the mountain, as so lofty an elevation usually carried a heavy covering. Perhaps the comparatively level plateaus which constituted the divide, exposed to warm winds and the direct rays of the sun, might account for that feature.

CHAPTER XXV.

Grizzly Bears Abound—Miss Ellen's Experience—Dining on Grizzly Steaks—A Pack Train Camp with Us—A Boreal Temperature—An Enchanting Picture—A Pelting Storm—Yellowstone River—A Rocky Road—A Dismal, Stormy Day—Visit from Red River Half-Breed Hunters—They Tell of Yellowstone Wonders—Cheerless Camp—Prospecting for Gold Causes Delay—Hot Springs—A Delightful Bath—"Land of The Dakotahs"—The Storm Clears the Atmosphere—Charming Surroundings—Crossing the Jefferson Fork—Barren and Sterile Plains—Noon Halt on Beaver Creek—A Visit from Miners—Reports of Gold Mines—An Excitement Begins—Company Decide to Separate—Camp Extravagance.

CAMP 73, August 26, Continued.—Grizzly bear tracks had become quite common along the trail through the mountains, though none of our immediate party had seen the monarch of the Rockies himself, and none desired to interview him. We had intruded into his domain, and it was expected that at any time he might have been found at home, prepared to receive. A grizzly's track in the deep dust could not be mistaken for anything else. Miss Ellen had an adventure this morning while walking along the trail up a mountain side, which for a time seemed to her as though she had disturbed Mr. or Mrs. Grizzly and the result



MISS ELLEN.



might be serious. She was ahead of the train some distance, alone, and while walking along was so absorbed that no thought of danger entered her mind; for some time she followed the bear trail, stepping regularly into his immense tracks. The foot prints were fresh, made after the night dews had fallen.

Bruin was probably out browsing for an early breakfast. This seemed a pleasant amusement for some time until the young lady heard a rustling among the bushes and the tramp of some animal rapidly approaching. Then for the first time a sense of danger occurred to her, and she turned and ran back to meet the train, fully expecting a bear to overtake her at every step. When the steps became closer, she glanced back and saw that the cause of her fright was a man on horseback coming down the mountains. He, too, it appears, had been following the same bear tracks until his horse became alarmed, as they had apparently gotten close to bruin; the horse would go no further, but wheeled and made quick time down the hill, being badly scared. Miss Ellen, a little frightened herself, had become somewhat exhausted in the excitement, and sat down when the horseman reached her, and waited for the train, which soon came up and relieved her anxiety.

She took no more chances thereafter when bear tracks were visible. Indeed it was deemed taking dangerous risks for a man to be far from his party while in the mountains, unless well armed; much more was it extra hazardous for a young woman.

Two or three trappers camped near us in the evening, having several grizzly skins among their

other accumulation of pelts, and one grizzly carcass, that of a big, fat fellow, captured a few hours before. Dead bears, like dead Indians, are certainly the good ones. Some of the neighbors of those hunters dined on choice grizzly steaks that evening. There is a wide difference between dining off bear flesh and having him dine off yours.

Late in the evening a company of five men, packers on the trail between Deer Lodge and Salt Lake City, came into our camp. Seeing from a distance our camp fires and white wagons and tents, they knew it was not an Indian village. Men on such expeditions, while ordinarily having no especial fear of Indians, always took precautions against surprises or being caught in ambush. This party had twenty loaded pack animals with them. They brought very discouraging reports about the mines in the sections where they transported merchandise, as well as to the conditions in the Salmon River country; saying also that while the gold "diggings" were not so fabulously rich as reported, hostile Indians were causing great trouble among miners and emigrants. Those reports looked a little gloomy to the members of the train with us who were destined for the mines.

Camp 74, August 27.—Morning dawned, cold and uncomfortable; the mercury, had there been a thermometer in the party, would have indicated a low temperature. Prophecies were freely ventured upon either a cold rain or a snow storm, a chilly change from yesterday. It took some time for the sun to get up over the tall ridge to the

eastward; not the least suspicion of a breeze agitated the atmosphere, so heavy coats or throat wraps were not in demand. The roads, for a good distance, continued through the same valley spoken of in the chronicles of yesterday, but along the road from time to time volcanic evidences appeared, and pieces of volcanic glass were occasionally picked up; pumice stone lay around in places—the congealed breath, or gas of volcanoes. When the road neared the mountains on the northern border of the valley, a number of ridges put down into it like saw teeth, and then the path led directly to the highest ridge of all. To scale this ridge the road took a winding course to make the ascent, and at several sharp points considerable rock and earth had been excavated to secure a safe track; the trail was long and heavy. A piercing wind from the north set in before the top was reached, which made ears tingle and noses feel as though they were on cold storage. The wind swept directly down from the snow-capped mountain ranges, themselves as cold as arctic icebergs, glistening in isolated, frozen splendor.

On ascending to the crest of one of the highest elevations—and the trails always seemed to lead to the highest part of a high spur—a valley beyond all the ridges, or foothills, was revealed toward the west, which far surpassed anything yet shown in that direction, in extent or beauty; but where so much is grand and wonderful, it is difficult to describe that which is the more lovely.

Involuntarily, as every wagon reached the summit and the enchanting panorama came into view,

the driver halted to get the full effect of the grand spectacle. It was too bright and beautiful to last; clouds began to gather rapidly, assuming many hues and shades until the sun was obscured and then a cold rain commenced falling, which continued throughout the remainder of the day. Driving on in a pelting rain storm is disagreeable at best; but situated as emigrants usually are it is doubly annoying.

On descending the last ridge the pathway led around the sharp projection of a rocky ledge; much labor had been expended to clear a wagon way around this obstruction, but when nature had gotten through with the original part of the work, the top of the ledge was capped with a wall of rock like a bulwark of superior natural engineering. The gulch was deep at the point where this road passed, and a misstep or the sliding sidewise of a wagon would have precipitated the whole down to certain destruction.

The road skirted the valley at the foot of the ridge, and was once no doubt, in good condition for wheeling, but boulders of all shapes had rolled down the side of the mountain, offering obstructions that made traveling difficult, and caused a number of unfortunate break downs. We rattled and jolted over them the best way possible, the ladies of the party being obliged to ride because of the rain; there was little choice in fact.

I rambled around among the hills during intervals when it was not raining, in search of some kind of a memento of the locality; a few little pieces of white quartz and agate were all the reward I obtained. We went into camp while it

was still raining; it was very dark before supper was prepared and under circumstances annoying enough to drive to distraction ladies situated as ours were.

Some Red River French half-breed hunters who came up to our noon camp had numberless questions to ask and considerable to tell about "heap big things" to be seen in the valleys north-east, "much water goosh, heap up"—motioning to explain the words, and rolling their eyes upward—"much water vera hot" and "heap stone trees" and other attractions of that wonderful region. Their broken language or patois did not make matters appear very distinct to us. It afterwards developed that these men were endeavoring to explain to us about the geysers, the hot springs and petrified trees of the Yellowstone, a short drive east of our camp; but white men had a limited knowledge of the beauties of that region forty-three years ago. These and other attractions of the park were off our road, and however pleasing it would have been to have seen those surprising wonders, surpassing anything in the known world, no one thought of going a single mile extra to hunt up anything, however bewitching the beauties might be.

Camp 75, August 28.—It was believed that the sun rose this morning at the appointed time, but none of our party saw it. The rain ceased falling before daybreak, but great banks of dark, lowering clouds hung low, obscuring everything and threatening further rain fall, or perhaps snow. The air was penetrating, cold and damp; every-

body felt the depressing influence; the mules even, in sympathetic recognition of the uncomfortable surroundings hung their heads and stood around mute and listless. A little chunk of hard bread and a handful of salt caused them to wag their big ears with some show of satisfaction.

The heavy clouds which hung over and around the mountain tops attracted some attention by peculiar actions as they rose and fell, separated and rolled away in rapid succession. Currents of air must have played fantastic tricks with the moisture in the atmosphere. The clouds skurried towards every point of the compass very rapidly, all currents moving at the same time. As fast as the upper stratum was cleared other cloud banks rushed in at quick pace to take the place. Around our bivouac, which had been selected because protected by a favoring point of rocks, the breeze was light.

The whole camp was detained until a late hour, ostensibly to wait for a small party to bring up a damaged wagon, delayed out on the road over night; in reality, as was discovered later, the temporary delay was to permit several of the party to go out prospecting for gold indications. Their hunt was fruitless, but they wasted precious hours. About 10 o'clock detached sections of the cavalcade commenced moving and defiled along the base of the mountains.

It was difficult to keep any trace of the directions and meanderings of our road as it wound in and out through the ravines and among the ridges when once we reached the floor of the valley, along the water level, and the distances cov-

ered from valley to valley. The growth of cottonwood and pine with branches reaching near the ground made shade for nearly the entire day.

The Yellowstone River was crossed the second time at an early hour; at the ford it was about seventy-five yards wide, shallow and as clear as crystal. One could hardly imagine that quiet and beautiful stream being lashed into angry fury a few miles down its course, where it enters a narrow cañon and plunges and boils in a noisy manner, as it seeks a passage among the rocks and other obstructions in the channel. That river is one of the chief attractions of the Yellowstone National Park. The entrance to the cañon was in plain sight from the last crossing.

About noon we halted by a large spring of water, which bubbled up as clear as crystal, but it was useless for our purpose; it was so hot that one could hold a hand in it but a brief second. The mules did not even try its temperature, hardly looked at it; animal instinct told them it was unfit for use at that place.

A number of hot springs in this locality sent up columns of steam intermittently, like the pulsation of some steam engine exhaust. The temperature of the water we were unable to ascertain; but it was hot enough to convince all that internal furnace fires were as near as was comfortable, and suggested the experience of the Dutchman in the Sweetwater Valley. Springs of cold water were found at a reasonable distance from the hot ones, which afforded abundance for all purposes, palatable and sweet.

Below the road a short distance, where a pool

was formed, there was a delightful bathing place, which lured a number of the party to try its waters to "renew their youth." The water was good to the taste, but a mineral deposit on the bank indicated the presence of magnesia and chalk and other substances in liberal proportion.

The road continued at the base of the mountain, and we followed it until near night, when it crossed a creek about twenty yards wide, the main drain of the valley, from appearances, north of the Yellowstone, and principal source of the Gallatin River, and then bore to the north. We crossed this stream several times; after the last crossing, a short distance further on, there was an ideal location for a camp, and everybody was anxious to stop; but an examination showed the lack of both wood and good water, and it was necessary to drive on.

At 4 o'clock we turned off the road and drove westward some distance down to the bank of a very fine stream, which really rose to the dignity of a river. It flowed quietly through a pretty valley, which narrowed at the point where the road crossed. This, we determined, was the Madison Fork. A pleasant grove of cottonwoods, an excellent growth of rich grass, wood in abundance and water unequalled in purity and temperature offered an ideal location and shelter for an encampment; and there we stopped after a long and hard half-day drive.

The morning clouds appeared to have concentrated near our last camp and exhausted their moisture in a heavy downpour; fortunately our train felt little of it. Toward evening the sun

came out bright and warm, which added much to creature comforts.

Since crossing the divide we had been in the "Land of the Dakotahs," and several of the tribe had been met, going over the trail in an opposite direction to ours. They were a peaceably inclined race of Indians, rarely interfering with traders or travelers. The stock of emigrant trains was usually safe when in the Dakotah country, tho some of the Dakotah Sioux were perpetually hunting an opportunity for mischief.

Camp 76, August 29.—The storm of yesterday and last night was entirely over before morning, and the atmosphere cleared up and everything was cheerful and bright by day dawn. When the sun rose the air soon became warm and revealed additional expansive beauties of landscape, which added charms to our surroundings. The road was over rolling ground most of the way; the ridges were on easy grades, and numerous little valleys were stocked with a growth of bright-leaved shrubs and grass of a very nutritious kind. At the base of the last ridge, around the point of which the road passed, commenced a very attractive little valley, shut in by lofty mountains.

Through the valley coursed the Jefferson River—known, of course, in this western region as the Jefferson Fork—its general direction being northward. At the ford the river was about one hundred and fifty yards wide, and shallow, not more than two and a half feet deep with a gravelly bottom; not a stone the size of a gallon

measure to be seen. The water was pure to the taste and as clear as crystal. The banks were fringed on either side with a heavy growth of cottonwood timber. A few fish, longer and darker colored than the mountain trout noticed in the streams where I had angled for them, darted out of sight when we drove into the water; but there was no time to coax them to take a hook, and no favorable pools in sight, so they were left undisturbed.

The Jefferson is one of the large affluents of the Missouri River, being second only to the Musselshell; that river rates next to the Yellowstone. The two last named streams drain an enormous area, taking their countless branches into consideration, and pour immense volumes of water of remarkable purity into the Missouri. They are very long and shallow, nearly their whole length running parallel a large part of the way and being obstructed by few narrow cañons and rapids. Several attempts had been made to navigate them by some of the early explorers and voyageurs, but with indifferent success. Only flat bottomed batteaux of very light draft could make the passage at all, and the portages had to be made around rapids whenever they occurred. There was no evidence that either stream was subject to serious overflowing from melting snow.

Soon after crossing the river the entire appearance of the country changed. The course of the river was to the eastward, while our trail was well to the northwest, which we traversed for fifteen miles over a barren and sterile plain. There was not a sign in that distance of water or evi-

dence of vegetable life, excepting, perhaps, greasewood and prickly pear—if one could dignify those outrages on nature as vegetable growth.

While on this long passage we met a small company of packers on their way to the upper waters of the Jefferson Fork to operate in gold mines, reported to have been discovered among the mountains there. They gave flattering reports of the success miners had met with, and these stories renewed the fever which had become a little dormant in our company. These men had a good stock of provisions and mining tools on their pack animals.

The countenances of many in our train began to take on a more cheerful expression, and several wanted to return and go into the mines at once, but they finally decided not to make the venture.

Halted at noon in the fine open valley on the bank of Beaver Creek, where there was an abundance of grass. While dinner was preparing, two or three other miners came in over a trail from the west, from a mining district at the head of the Beaver, recently discovered in a comparatively open country, at least one where the mountains were not lofty and precipitous.

They had noticed our caravan a long way off, and came to intercept it to purchase provisions if possible. As an evidence of their success in washing out gold, each exhibited a well-filled buckskin sack of gold in dust and small nuggets.

That exhibition removed all doubts, and a genuine mining excitement began. Most of the company resolved to go at once to the new mines, and

acting on the impulse, began immediate preparations for the start, harnessing up their animals without giving them time to feed and rest, throwing over the kettles of whatever food was being cooked, and piling their belongings into their wagons with the utmost reckless haste and confusion. Every separate wagon, as it was made ready, moved out, while covered conveyances and parties on horseback could be seen for several miles scattered along the road up the grade toward the mountains; others took matters more temperately, preferring to wait until next morning, or at least until after a meal, and time to permit their animals to rest.

A portion of our party whose original intention was to go into the mines, when a favorable place was reached, decided to separate from us at this point and remain in this district. This determination ended our traveling for the day. Mr. and Mrs. Hendee and Mr. Taylor were the ones who came to this conclusion, and decided to make arrangements with Judge Hewitt for the light wagon of our train with a pair of mules and a portion of the provisions, stores sufficient for a commencement of life in the mines. The remaining portion of the day and evening was occupied in matters pertaining to the separation.

This company of people founded the little settlement of Bannock City, Beaver Head County, in the section of the country afterwards included in the territory of Montana. It was a reasonably prosperous community, as many mushroom mining centres were in that early day, considering the fact that the mining district was on the east

flank of the northern Rocky Mountain range. Mr. and Mrs. Hendee remained there some time, returning to their New York home about a year and a half afterwards, where Mrs. Hendee soon died. Hendee and Taylor passed from my horizon at that time; I never heard from either of them again.

Taylor and I had been on intimate terms of friendship from the first, and we had many things in common. A heavy military overcoat belonging to him did good duty for both of us when either was standing guard during the weary vigils of many piercingly cold and stormy nights. I hope he prospered in the full measure he justly deserved; he was a kind-hearted, worthy man, and deserved every success.

Many grouse—or sage-hens, as known in that vicinity—were noticed on the fifteen mile desert we drove over to-day, and the sportsmen of the party hunted some of them; several dozen were bagged. The judge could not resist the temptation and went out after some of them and secured enough for a company meal. When in full plumage the grouse is a handsome bird; in a sage section it required a deal of parboiling to dissipate the pronounced taste of wormwood, and then the bird must be stewed, to extract a slight pungent bitterness.

From this point, by the best method of estimating distances we had from the crude chart in our possession, we judged it to be, approximately, fifteen hundred miles to our final destination, Olympia, at the head of Puget Sound.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Camp Aroused at an Early Hour—An Elaborate Breakfast—The Parting of Old Friends—A Small Company Go Forward—A Welcome Addition to the Party—Cross Wisdom River—Some Beautiful Country—"Music Hath Charms," etc.—Overtaken by Packers—Entertaining Flathead Indians—Roads Fairly Good—Going Up Grade Steadily—Crossing the Rocky Mountains the Third Time—On the West Slope Once More—Grand Scenery—Deer Lodge Prairie—Exciting Trout Fishing Experience—Profitable Traffic in Fishing Tackle—Our First Wild Animals.

CAMP 77, August 30.—Camp was astir at an early hour; the morning was bright and cheerful, an auspicious beginning for a day that meant a final separation and a sundering of family ties—for our little company had been a quiet family, undisturbed by the wrangling of discordant elements which had been so offensively conspicuous in so many cases within our hearing in the past. Breakfast was prepared with unusual care, and an elaborate spread was the result; elaborate for the benighted region and our assortment of provisions. A few birds bagged at daybreak and fried in the choice fat of the plains—bacon grease—greatly improved the bill of fare that morning. An extravagance not usually indulged in by our ladies in the rough camp life we had been leading,

was a table cloth for the last breakfast. The whole larder had been ransacked for some forgotten delicacy. It was an occasion and a meal made memorable by members of that little party who gathered around the board and broke bread together for the last time.

When the hour arrived for camp to be struck—7 o'clock was the time fixed upon—wagons were loaded, parting words spoken, the last handshake given, and the two parties moved out on their separate ways in silence. Tears attested feelings which were denied utterance in words; the usual signal by parting friends, the waving of handkerchiefs, was given for a time, and then both companies were lost to view.

Our former companions started for the mines, situated about one hundred miles southwest, in a cañon of the mountains; to reach the locality it was necessary to retrace about ten miles of the valley trail we had traversed and then follow a mountain stream through cañon where no wagon had ever passed before. The stream was Beaver Head, the same one by which we had camped.

Our road led directly to the north, and we were soon shut in by mountains, broken and rough, seemingly radiating in all directions like the spokes of a wheel. We had some expectations of being obliged to make the remainder of the journey alone, unless meeting with some chance traveler going over a route scarcely known by emigrants, at this early period. When we defiled into the first gorge after leaving the plains in the morning, several covered wagons were on the

trail behind us. Following close to us was one company of four young men with a wagon drawn by four splendid American horses. We had parted company with them more than a month before, as they had traveled faster than we did. When our forces were mobilized we numbered eleven people and three wagons.

These gentlemen we ascertained were going through to Walla Walla direct, and coincidentally had chosen the northern route for the same reason we did, to escape the government escort and the enormous emigration over the old emigrant trail, and to get on the highway where feed, wood and water were fully assured. A renewed traveling combination was therefore an agreeable matter for all parties.

The roads for mountain gorges were very good, and fair progress was made. Halted for the noon refreshment in a little valley on the bank of Big Hole or Wisdom River, which here runs through a little well wooded valley about two miles wide. This was a stream about one hundred yards across, with a deep and rapid current, a branch of the Jefferson Fork, with which it unites a few miles east. When within about one mile from the river, three pack trains were met, all on the way from Deer Lodge to the Beaver Head mining district, with goods and provisions. Each of these trains numbered from fifteen to twenty-five pack mules. These packers directed us to a shallow and safe ford of the river, off the main trail. The river rises in the mountains to the north and courses through a valley bearing the same name. A few large cottonwood trees fringed its banks



BIG HOLE PRAIRIE.

at the ford, affording pleasant shade. Big Hole prairie was a beautiful valley in the wilderness of mountains, being about fifty miles in length by perhaps fifteen wide.

After making the ford the trail followed the river for some distance; we camped by it at evening on the rim of a broad expanse of prairie. The air was exceedingly oppressive all day, as not a particle of breeze could be detected; but as the roads were hard and gravelly, we were spared the affliction of dust. We lessened our journey about twenty miles.

The mountains everywhere appearing were lofty and somber, their crests and the numerous peaks towering above them being covered with snow. In the evening it became quite cold, but was not otherwise unpleasant. One of the number of our newly found traveling companions produced a violin, and in these wild mountain fastnesses its sweet tones seemed to arouse an inspiring and comfortable feeling.

Such prairies as we found to-day, and to be met with everywhere, are called "Holes" in Rocky Mountain phraseology. To reach the valley the road leads up and over a mountain called Ross's Hole Mountain, which has an elevation of about six thousand feet. The ascent from the east was so gradual that one had little idea of the elevation and its being really a mountain; were it not for the direction taken by the water this would be considered a level prairie.

Camp 78, Sunday, August 31.—According to the calendar, this was the Sabbath in organized

society; there was nothing else to remind one of that fact. We had long been used to the "early call"—that is, some one expected to be up by the time streaks of light began to illumine the tops of the mountains on the sunrise side, to start a fire and get kettles of water over for the breakfast preparations; this was usually about 4 o'clock. The morning watch was called by the guard, who then had an opportunity, if he could find a place out of the way in which to lie down, to snatch an hour for sleep; just as often he had no sleep after his guard call at midnight. By the time the water was boiling the ladies would be ready for their part of the work; it was always the same, whether Sunday or Saturday. No one minded early rising in good weather, but on a cold, stormy or icy morning it was not the pleasantest thing in the world.

Our train was now but a small one; three wagons, eight men and three women, with fourteen animals, made up the sum total. Traveling with and camping near us were several other small parties who were liable to drop out any time when a satisfactory location was presented, and therefore added nothing in the way of protection. The roads for the day were generally good, but we found some very rough places. The mountains were lofty, rearing their sharp peaks high up into the blue expanse above us; the sides of the mountains were, as seen at a distance, heavily covered by large pitch pine and cedar timber, but inaccessible. The valleys had a timber growth of indifferent vitality, being dwarfed and knotty, mixed with alder and vine maple. The gorge where the

river breaks through the mountains was narrow; the granite walls were of tremendous proportions. Limestone and marble of variegated hues were noticed, as also outcroppings of lignite in several places.

The day passed off more pleasantly than common, but when a light breeze subsided, old Sol heated the atmosphere far above the temperate. Where we halted at noon was in the midst of a fine valley by the side of a creek which was about ten yards wide. Grass could nowhere grow more luxuriantly than here, and wild grains were in profusion. While we were at dinner two horsemen rode up, coming from the same direction we did; they were bound for Deer Lodge, making a hasty trip to get a stock of stores and mining utensils. They reported the mining district as extensive and the yield rich; people were arriving in considerable numbers, but all were generally short of provisions, which were scarce and costly. These gentlemen accepted an invitation to dine with us, and were profuse in their expressions of appreciation of the favor.

While at dinner a company of twelve Indians rode in from the north, the direction toward which we were traveling; when they rode up the salutation of "How! how!" was duly responded to. They, too, were invited to dine; a hastily brewed boiler of coffee and some hard tack seemed to please them greatly, and a gift of "tobac" added to their happiness. One surly fellow kept himself to himself and took no part, stubbornly remaining in the saddle. These Indians belonged to the Flathead tribe; their faces

were highly ornamented in Indian artistic effects, and their buckskin clothing was profusely decorated with beads, paint and eagle feathers. They were fine-looking specimens of red men, as red men go, and seemed kindly disposed; their mounts were superb animals.

When these Indians appeared in sight, our party had gathered our animals close up to the wagons, and each man had occasion to carefully inspect his rifle, as tho that was the regular noon requirement. It was for show, of course, but these Indians were friendly and on good terms with all white people.

Camp 79, September 1.—A beautiful morning with bright and pleasant environment contributed much toward a good start for a drive over the mountain range on this first day of the month. The trail was a continuation of hills and bluffs, up, up, continuously an up grade, the roadway, however, smooth and hard. The spurs we crossed or rounded were mere foothills in this latitude, but would be respectable sized mountains if standing alone. None of them were rough and rocky or seamed with chasins that looked more than ordinary valleys. Pitch pine trees were growing on their tops and sides and other evergreens were numerous, like cedars and hemlocks. The little streams we crossed or that meandered down the valley by the roadside were noisy torrents, showing the declivity of the grade.

At nine o'clock we passed the dividing line of the Rocky Mountains for the third time, where the waters separate, flowing east and west, ulti-

mately mingling with the Atlantic and the Pacific. The grade that we had been climbing for so many days is all that revealed the altitude of this place; yet in all directions, ranges and peaks towered up thousands of feet above the elevation we were on. We looked over again into Washington Territory; the road winds down the slope into Deer Lodge Prairie, so named from the great herds of deer which were formerly seen there. The occasional glimpse we had of the prairie from the elevated points showed it to be a valley of great extent, surrounded by lofty, snow-capped ranges. The prairie is fully fifty miles long and from ten to twenty wide. The drive down to the foot of the mountains was uneventful. The valley was covered with a wonderful growth of grass, and the floor was cut by numerous little creeks a few feet below the surface in such a way as to make traveling over it uncertain, as well as dangerous off the defined road, as no indications were visible a few rods away where a creek was located.

Halted shortly after noon by Deer Lodge Creek, a stream of respectable size and one of the main branches of Hell Gate River. We had not been there long before other small trains and single outfits began to gather in, coming over a trail leading from the east and the north, and the camp soon had the old familiar appearance in numbers. The little river was literally swarming with trout, and they darted around from pool to pool in large schools, showing their bright sides in the sunlight. That was too much of a temptation to resist, and a camp for the rest of the day and night

was at once decided upon; some of those fishes must be had for the table.

I began getting out my lines and hooks and prepared for the sport; and as luck was in my favor one time, I happened to have quite a stock on hand—hold-overs from home fishing excursions—and there were none others in camp. The word soon went out and I was kept busy for the next half hour in disposing of my tackle. My assortment of lines ranged from fine linen to silk and sinew, but the hooks were all the limerick pattern. There was no established price, but anxious fishermen would lay down a dollar or a two-and-a-half coin and select their articles. It was my busy speculating day. I reserved for our own party lines enough to last the rest of the trip, and made a clean up of thirty-two and a half dollars without an effort—the most profitable speculation of my life.

Those fish had probably never been disturbed, at least enough to make them unduly shy, and never did the wary trout take the hook more greedily. All that was needed was a little care so as not to be seen, a pole a few feet long and a short line with a piece of red flannel for decoy. The anxious, or foolish fish, would jump, half a dozen at a time, a foot out of the water to snap that red rag fraud, and one of them would certainly take it; his mates would see him no more. Very soon after this fun commenced the ladies began frying and serving trout, done to a turn; the delicious wonders of that feast can only be imagined.

More than two hundred dozen beauties from

five to ten inches long were taken in the next three hours, every man in the party hooking from fifty to a hundred fish each; the sport continuing



SHY VISITOR.

until approaching nightfall drove the fish to cover. We had trout galore for dinner, supper and breakfast and between meals until the next day at noon, caught from that one stream, with very little effort on our part.

While stopping here a magnificent elk came up near camp and "surveyed the landscape o'er" in a leisurely manner. He was a handsome fellow. Two or three of the party dropped their fishing and undertook the difficult task of stalking an elk.

He scented their design and showed us how he could use his heels in fine style. Soon after two others came up, looked around, became satisfied and loped away; it was plainly not our day for capturing elk; but we consoled ourselves that they were indeed handsome fellows and the first wild animals we had seen on the trip, and turned our attention again to the finny tribe, with which we met with much better success.

We met a number of men, singly, by twos and a half dozen all with animals well loaded, packing supplies to the mines which surrounded this valley, one outfit was a large wagon heavily loaded with mining tools. In the evening a number of horsemen, lightly loaded, passed our camp, bound for the same destination. We had assuredly reached a portion of the mountain region where there was considerable activity and apparent security for life and property, which was a pleasant condition to consider in view of the fact our company was small and not capable of a strong defence if any of the numerous bands of untamed Indians should feel inclined to make an attempt to capture the party.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Deer Lodge Prairie—The First Settlement—Hot Mineral Springs—Mineral Mound—A Singular Formation—Numerous Cold Springs—Again a Thunder Storm—Settlement Number Two—Stuart's Settlement—A Law-Abiding Community—Large Trading Post—A Permanent Gallows—High-Priced Whiskey—A Villainous Concoction—The Mullan, or Military Wagon Road—Fort Benton to Walla Walla—Friendly Indians—Late Papers Two Months Old—A Ham of Antelope—A Howling Success—Hell Gate River—A Mad Torrent—Lofty Mountains—Rattlesnake Hollow—Saddle for a Pillow.

CAMP 80, September 2.—Morning dawned bright and pleasant, tho the air was crisp, owing to the many snow-capped ranges on all sides. Camp was astir in good season, the hours of rest in a bracing climate having given renewed vitality to all. The trains moved out early so as to make a good drive over the level plain before us, to take every advantage of good roads. It was a magnificent prairie, and one could scarcely realize that the vast plateau was so nearly the crest itself of the Rocky Mountains, which it really is. The natural roadway could not have been improved on. This divide is something over six thousand feet elevation.

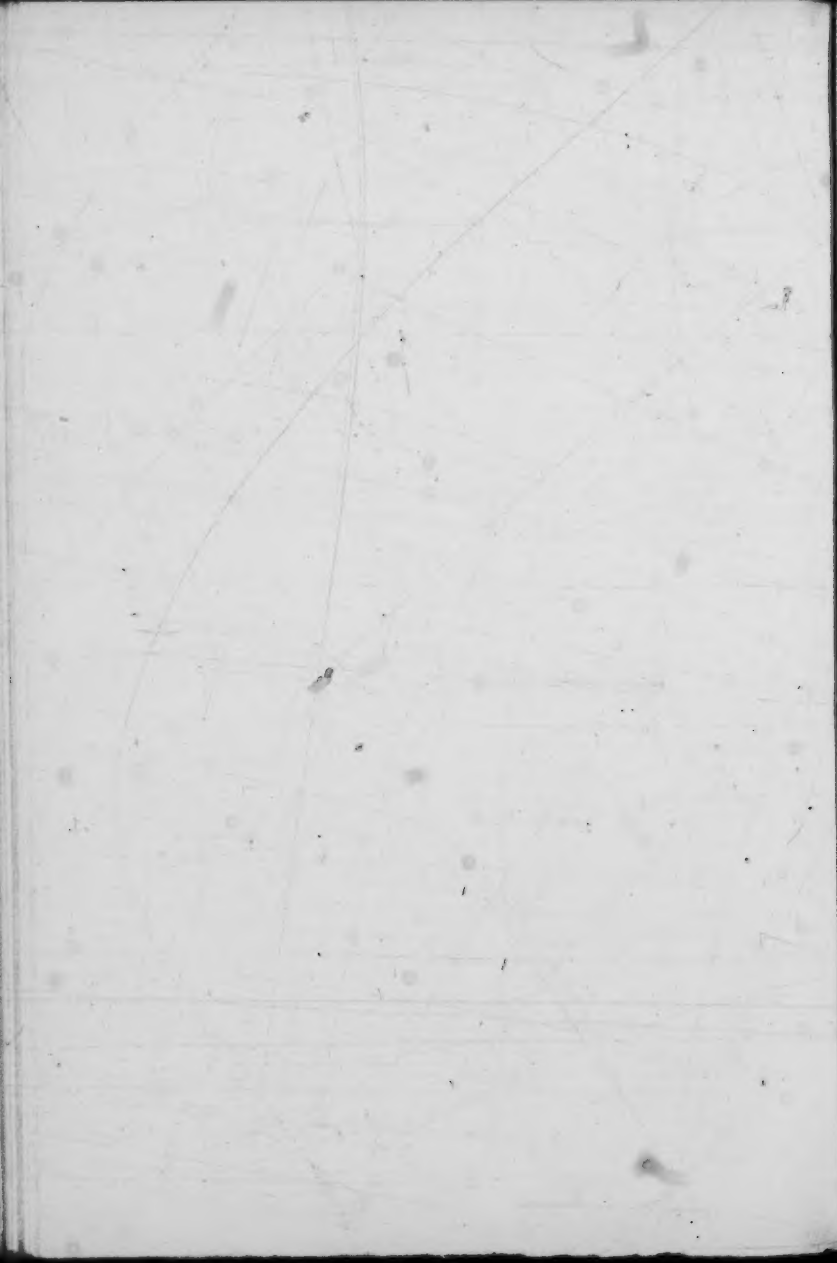
News travels fast sometimes, especially good

news in a mining country; there seems to be no end to the rush for the mines we were driving away from. Scarcely an hour passed without our meeting individuals or companies on their way to the mines on the Jefferson Fork or Beaver Head, a few to the headwaters of the Salmon River, all anxious to get to destination as quickly as possible. Nearly all these people had left good paying mines to hunt up something better. Some parties, however, were going down into the lower part of the valley into a large meadow to cut hay for the winter, or to find a safe retreat for themselves and stock to remain in permanently. Several farms had already been located and cabins erected; everything that would grow in a temperate zone would grow here, as the soil is strong and deep; timber for all purposes had to be obtained in the mountains and transported a long distance.

Camp was located on the bank of the river, the road veering from a straight course to make it. On the north bank of the river was a considerable settlement, and it seemed as tho we were nearing civilization once more. The settlers here were Canadian French and numerous half-breeds, scattered remnants of those who were once trappers and hunters for the Hudson Bay Fur Company, settling down to a more domestic life than any of them had formerly enjoyed, as their former occupation had in a measure ceased. They had married squaws, and to judge from the troop of yelling and romping children on the opposite river bank, were raising half or quarter-breeds enough to populate a large town. At this time they were



HOT MINERAL SPRING MOUND.



not hunting continuously, but giving considerable time to civilized pursuits, and were raising grain, horses and cattle. This was called "Settlement Number One," having no other name, not having risen to the dignity of being a "City."

Near one of the larger creeks, and I judged near the centre of the valley, stood a conical mound about thirty feet high, of a dark red and gray color. The mound was about a fourth of a mile to the south of the regularly traveled road, rising from the level floor of the prairie, and presented attractive features sufficient to induce the entire company to turn aside and visit it; and they were well paid for so doing. Around the base were innumerable hot springs, bubbling and steaming like active boiling cauldrons, heated by hidden fires. The water seemed pure, when dipped up and cooled enough to taste, with slight trace of soda. On the top of the mound was an immense boiling spring about three feet or more in diameter, developing astonishing energy. We tried to sound the depth of the spring by lashing together what sticks could be had, in all about twenty feet in length, but did not reach bottom. None of the water from this singular spring flowed over the top of the mound, but all percolated through it; and that revealed its formation. The water was strongly charged with a whitish mineral substance, or soft salts, which precipitated as soon as exposed to the air, and solidified, gradually increasing in height and size, and the mound was the result.

Cold springs were near by, which were also slightly impregnated with soda. A number of the

company sought a sheltered pool and bathed in the warm mineral water. Fragments of this singular formation were gathered and taken away to preserve as souvenirs.

Camp 81, September 3.—From settlement number one we proceeded on down the valley, over roads exceptionally good, following the course of the river, to settlement number two; the two little villages are separated by about half a day's journey, which on the excellent roads we passed over meant about fifteen miles. Settlement number two was also on the north bank of the river, and was intended to be made a place of importance, tho just then in the incipient, or crýsalis stage. A town site had been laid out with some degree of regularity, but I saw no corner lot signs nor real estate rustlers.

A dozen or more cabins, or lodges, as they were termed here, had already been erected and were occupied by large families, and other cabins were in process of construction. Still others were in contemplation, the builders then being out to the mountains after the necessary materials. A single light of glass eight by ten size served the cabins as pretentious windows and showed that the owners were inclined to secure luxuries, and were in touch with some part of the outer world whence such things came.

A store had been established in which a fair quantity of goods was displayed, from which emigrants and miners might replenish their stocks of provisions, if they were prepared to come down handsomely. Everybody in the set-

tlement jingled silver money—uniformly half dollar pieces—and it seemed to be in plenty. The enterprising merchant had his gold scales for weighing dust, as that metal had begun to come in quite freely. "No trust" was a legend in English, conspicuously displayed, as was another, which may have been in Choctaw or Red River French for ought I knew, as I could not read it. It was anticipated that companies of explorers, prospectors, miners and packers would make this place their winter quarters. Then the settlement might assume the dignity of a name. The river was about twenty yards wide and shallow, but with a rapid current.

The population, perhaps one hundred, all told, were, as in settlement number one, largely ex-servants of the fur companies, but a few Americans with squaw wives were included. The country around this settlement was everything which could be wished to attract and sustain a large population; good soil; of wheat-growing possibilities, a vast area for grazing, with gold mines on all sides, and situated on the great highways between the north and the south, the east and the west.

Our train, as did others also, remained in this favorable camp the remainder of the day to overhaul, repair and do the necessary week's slicking up and give animals a good rest. The evening was beautiful, and all our neighbors across the river seemed to be out in the moonlight enjoying it to their full bent, if noise could be accepted as evidence.

Camp 82, September 4.—From settlement number two the road wound around among the mountain spurs; some we had to pass directly over; the trail was not troublesome here and good progress was made. A cañon about two hundred yards wide between two very pretentious ranges was a water gap for the Hell Gate River, and afforded passageway for the trail. The road through the cañon was shaded by a thick growth of underbrush and a few cottonwoods and pines. A number of grouse were bagged in the underbrush, which served to make a good dinner. We crossed the river three times, the fords being somewhat rough and rocky.

On leaving the cañon trail we passed into a fine portion of the same great valley, and soon drove into another little settlement known as Stuart's, situated in the westerly end of the valley; the village contained twelve cabins, each of good proportions, and having windows of four lights of glass; preparations were being made for the immediate erection of additional cabins; and withal, Stuart's, to judge from general appearances, was on the way to future growth and prosperity.

Here we intercepted the great military wagon road from Fort Benton on the Missouri River, to Fort Walla Walla on the Columbia, in Washington Territory, the highway we had been aiming to reach since leaving the Fort Hall valley. This great national highway had been surveyed and constructed five or six years before by the government, under direction of Lieutenant John Mullan, of the regular army. It was intended as an artery

to afford communication between the west and the east over the northern part of the continent, as a military necessity; without this road no wheeled vehicle could have made the journey. Over this road many emigrants were coming in from the east, attracted by the seductive reports of great gold discoveries, and heavy loads of goods were being freighted from Fort Benton. Our general course of travel since leaving South Pass had been north about five degrees; this national highway will take us to the westward, its meanderings conforming to passes among the broken mountain ranges.

Stuart, from whom the settlement derived its name, was an old settler in the country and a plainsman, known for hundreds of miles around. He had established a trading post, carried a heavy stock of merchandise and his trade extended over an enormous area. He was respected by everybody and feared by evil doers. He had amassed great wealth, as matters were reckoned at that period, and his cattle and horses were numbered by the thousand. In this locality were many gold mines which yielded good returns.

As an evidence that this distant region had taken upon itself some of the essentials of civilization, it may be stated that a large district had been arranged into a county, and proper officers were provided for, of course, not omitting a sheriff. It was rationally governed within itself, having its own courts and ways of administering justice, and they were seldom at fault; the rough characters which would naturally drift to such an out-of-the-way frontier had to be restrained and

dealt with when occasion required. Outlaws, cut-throats, thieves and all kinds of desperadoes congregated where gold was plenty and all manner of villainies were indulged in; restraint had to be enforced and the mailed hand did the most of it.

There was no jail or other place of confinement at Stuart's, but when he built his store building—and it was as strong as a fort—a heavy log plate was extended at one end about ten or twelve feet. This, I discovered—when curiosity prompted me to enquire about the object of the projecting timber—was a permanent gallows on which to hang horse thieves and murderers. The trials were always short, but generally conclusive. A milder form of punishment than death by hanging or being shot, would prompt revenge at the first opportunity, on the part of the culprit, so the more certain and drastic punishment was almost universally resorted to. Four murderers had been hanged at one time on this prominent gallows, a few weeks before, and eight days before our visit one was shot to death and another hung for mule stealing. Punishment of this kind for such offenses seemed terribly severe to us who were just from law-abiding communities, and one shuddered to hear of it; but other men get hardened as well as those who become confirmed outlaws.

One of the much-sought-for commodities dispensed at this establishment was whiskey at "two bits"—twenty-five cents—a glass. It was said to have been a proportionate mixture of blue vitriol, old boots, fusil oil and log wood, strained through a coil of barbed wire; I don't know; I did not try

it. It certainly stirred up strife wherever indulged in.

A number of Indians were around the post, all quiet and peaceable. They were members of the Flathead nation. The explanation given us for not meeting the Blackfeet, the most warlike and troublesome of all Indians north of the Snake River, was that they had been obliged to follow the buffalo so far north that they had not been able to kill their required number and return. The explanation was entirely satisfactory. The Assinaboines, the Saskatchewan from the north, and Pen d'Oreilles and Nez Percés from the west, make the Deer Lodge and Stuart's a place of frequent resort. Other tribes went there also at times when it was deemed safe to do so.

The first newspaper any of us had seen since starting from Omaha was secured here. It was printed in St. Louis and contained news dated August 9th. It was a well-worn copy, having passed through many hands, and tho two months old its contents were news to our party, and it was read with much pleasure. I gave "two shillings" for the paper, and we believed we got that much good out of it.

The fresh beef and a quarter of antelope we procured at Stuart's were a welcome change from our steady diet of bacon and beans. A large piece of the beef was roasted barbecue style, browned to a turn, and served hot. An attempt to describe that feast would spoil the recollection of it.

Every snarling and howling animal in the valley must have gathered around last camp, and in-

dulged in the most unearthly racket for half the night. Their shrill, penetrating shrieks made the very atmosphere vibrate and ache for hours; they made a howling success of their noisy greeting; but it was not appreciated.

From this settlement the remainder of the journey was made with a limited company, consisting of our own party of seven and the four men before mentioned. All other parties previously accompanying us had scattered in various directions.

Deer Lodge prairie is perhaps the largest valley in the mountain district of the United States and contains about eight hundred square miles of arable land, and every acre is occupied now for wheat growing or grazing. The Hell Gate River flows through the prairie for sixty miles. The many little feeders to the Hell Gate which courses through the valley supply unfailing water for all uses.

Camp 83, September 5.—Made a good start this morning in order to surmount difficulties and cross high ridges which we had been assured were before us. The river's course was among the mountains and through rough cañons; the trail to avoid these as much as possible turned away towards the south taking advantage of what valley floor was to be had; it did not touch the river again until late in the afternoon, and then we camped in a narrow valley. The road for the whole day was up over ridges and down through rough gorges of the Hell Gate Mountains. The mountains on either side were steep and lofty,



and covered with a dense forest of pine, which gave a pleasing effect to the valley. The streams coursing through the gorges were fringed with the same kind of timber. The evening meal was prepared over a pine fire which sputtered and crackled in the old familiar way, from the pitch it contained. There was no restriction as to the amount of fuel for the evening camp fire, and that gorge was lighted up until a late hour by a half dozen big fires.

I had given my two blankets to one of the drivers of the main wagon when he had a turn with the mountain fever, back in the Gros Ventres range, and on recovery he had forgotten to return them: my bed part of this time was a board used to separate divisions of the load; my pillow, the donkey's saddle and my cover the saddle blanket. When fuel was in abundance, I made a comfortable bed by the camp fire, but sometimes I found frost glistening near my face on the big brass nail heads in the saddle. When Taylor relieved me on guard duty, I had his bed in the tent. The big camp-fires this time dispelled all thought of frost or discomfort.

Tho we had crossed the main divide of the Rocky Mountains several days ago, so that it was a long way behind us, we were not out of the mountains by any means, and appearances showed that our real mountain experience was yet to come.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Costly Highways—Frightful Gorges—Continued Dangers—Mountain Roads in Earnest—Splendid Pine Forest—The Buzzard a Vile Bird—An Anxious Four Hours—An Indian Camp—Awful Precipices—Devil's Causeway—Lofty Ranges—A Perilous Mid Air Drive—A Winter Camp—Big Blackfoot River—"Hell Gate" Pass—Music in the Wilderness—First White Settlers—American Women a Pleasure to Meet—A Pretty Little Settlement—The Bitter Root a Lovely Valley—Our First Potatoes—A Luxury—Pioneer Saw Mill—Cantonment Stevens—Beautiful Bitter Root Valley—A Sublime Scene—Indian Visitors—Chinook Jargon—Destructive Forest Fires—Wonderful Changes—An Elevated Camp.

CAMP 84, September 6.—What we anticipated yesterday in the way of mountains we received to-day with compound interest. The road followed the circuitous course of the river through the narrow gorges, as it probably could not have been placed anywhere else. Heretofore we have had natural passes through the mountain ranges, so much so that it seemed as though they were made on purpose to permit the passage of wagons. Over the trail traversed to-day there was nothing natural, but everything artificial.

The road for nearly the entire distance covered to-day had to be made and at a tremendous outlay of engineering skill, energy and money; in

places the trail was cut in the mountains like a railroad grade, with sharper curves, or courses, at times blasted out of solid rock a long way up the mountain side, at other times cut through earth or loose stones and boulders. The loose earth made difficult footing for animals and hard wheeling; and where rocks and boulders occurred; the way was terribly rough on the mules' feet and the wagons. The cuts were barely wide enough for wagons, and it was necessary to drive very slow to avoid a collision with jutting points of rock that if hit carelessly with slight force would have tumbled a wagon down hundreds of feet over frightfully broken cliffs.

When the road passed directly over a hill, from the bottom the ascent looked almost impossible; in some cases lines had to be made fast to a wagon tongue, and a team hitched to it somewhere up the grade where footing could be secured, to help the team attached to the wagon; there was no such thing as climbing one of those grades in any other way; the descent being the same, wagons had to be eased down with lines and care exercised in both cases. One cut was through a fine red stone resembling slate, very solid and handsome; in spots variegated colors indicated mottled marble. Where wagons had rubbed against the rock walls, they were beautifully polished.

A self-evident fact is that the more water pours into the parent stream the larger it becomes. This was a noticeable condition in the Hell Gate River; every little stream which discharged into the main river seemed to swell the volume immensely and added much to the noise of the torrent as it rushed

madly along. Inasmuch as explorers had given the expressive name repeated above to the brawling river for good and sufficient reasons, perhaps, some of our party suggested that the section passed to-day ought to be the Devil's Causeway; in the fitness of things this name was appropriate.

The road for some time followed the west bank of the river; at the foot of the first heavy grade the trail crossed the river by what was once a strong bridge, but the structure was weakening with age, and we crossed over it with some misgivings. But as a ford was absolutely out of the question, the choice was the bridge or a permanent residence at the end of it. The structure was about fifty feet above the raging torrent below, and the seething waters were enough to make the strongest of the party wish that he were somewhere else.

For this gorge the sun set at an early hour; we were so buried up in these lofty mountains that the orb of day was lost to us long before it reached the horizon.

The mile posts along the way indicated that we were gradually nearing the pass of Hell Gate, for which we were devoutly thankful. No living things were seen along this causeway except a few buzzards, the foul bird that may be found anywhere where it is possible to be in at a death. Around our camp appeared a flock of crows; they greeted us with clamorous delight, their voices having the same musical sound it ever had. The crow is known to be a caw-tious bird and they kept at a respectable distance. Growing in great profusion in the valley was a variety of pleasant

tasting berries, one of them strongly resembling the cultivated raspberry. They were an excellent fruit, but none of them ever got far enough along toward camp to be made into pies. Wild flowers of varied colors were ambitiously emulating the pines in an effort to get up towards the sun.

Camp 85, Sunday, September 7.—Time being of great value we continued our march to-day. The pine forests we entered yesterday evening continued to become more dense and dark as we advanced. In a little nook by a bend in the river a small band of Indians was located. They had constructed huts from the small pine logs to be found in abundance, and they seemed to be permanent structures, suitable, at least, for Indian occupancy; Indians do not rate very high as architects and housebuilders. The inmates, mostly children and dogs, came out to see our train pass and seemed pleased at the sight.

The road was fairly good for a few miles, along a narrow defile following the course of the river. On clearing this easy roadway we came to a mountain that had to be surmounted; and it was a tremendous pile. Cuts along the granite face of the mountain had been made for three miles, and not an inch more rock was removed than appeared necessary to enable a wagon to pass; the passageway was perilous, and it was an anxious four hours which were consumed in making it. So narrow was the cut that it was impossible for a person on foot to pass beside a wagon. In a few places the outer edge had fallen

away which the men in the lead had to repair as best they could. It was a dangerous drive, suspended as we were in midair half way up that mountain side between heaven and earth with a mad torrent rushing over great boulders a thousand feet below, down a sheer precipice. A miss move by an animal or an unexpected jolt of a wagon would have precipitated the whole over that declivity. The drive was made in safety, whereat there was great satisfaction; but the tension to the mind and nervous system was something exhausting.

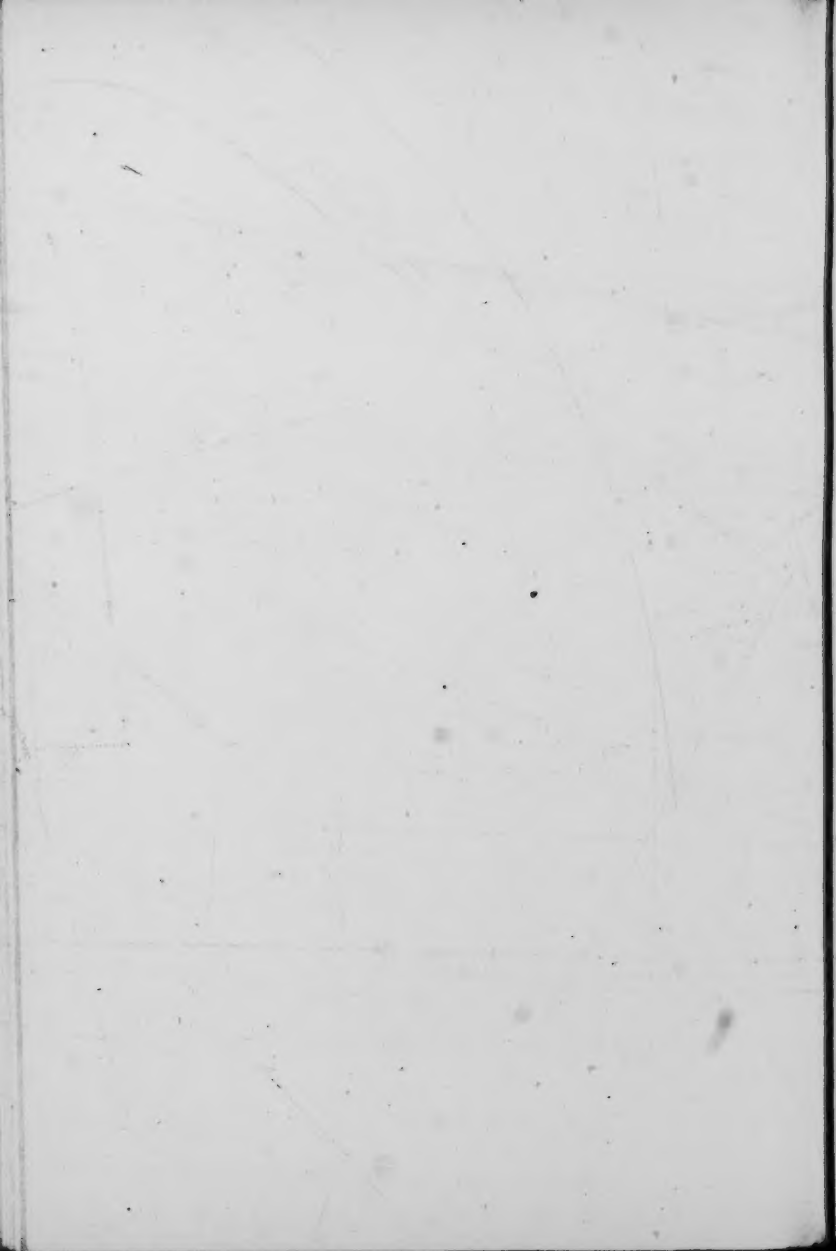
Some of the party expressed the prevailing feeling, that if what we passed yesterday was the Devil's Causeway, this place was surely the Devil's Den. There was certainly nothing supernatural about the place further than its elevation. It would have been a serious problem to contemplate had other wagons been met on that grade; but this road was not made for eastbound travel.

The valleys and mountain sides were seamed in every direction by well-worn trails and bridle-paths made by Indians when roaming through the country and packers en route for the numerous mining districts; but it needs must have been a skilled mountaineer who would have undertaken traveling one of them without a trusty guide or a compass.

After scaling this mountain we did not encounter any very considerable elevation the rest of the day, as the road had been constructed along the level of the narrow valley, by the side of the brawling river. In one valley of about two miles in length and half that in width, under sheltering



HELL GATE--CADOTT'S PASS.



long-leaved pines, were half a dozen log huts. This had been Lieutenant Mullan's winter camp, while the road building was in progress. It was an ideal place for either a summer or winter residence. These cabins were going rapidly to ruin. At the end of this valley we crossed the Big Blackfoot River on a bridge near the place where that river discharges an immense volume into the Hell Gate. The bridge was once a substantial structure, there being no scarcity of good timber, but at this time it was showing evidence of dilapidation. A halt was called and a survey made; it was a risky thing to do, but the venture of crossing had to be made, happily with safety.

Soon after crossing the Blackfoot we drove through the "Hell Gate," the entrance to Cadott's Pass of the Rocky Mountains, and passed into the beautiful Bitter Root valley. From the names given the river and pass, one would have been justified in imagining things terrible to be encountered in the last pass in the mountains; but it was an agreeable disappointment. Instead of being a "hell" it was Paradise compared with all other passes in this region. The roads were level and smooth, and hardly a jar was perceptible. Early explorers beyond all question had a terrible time in making their way along or over this river before the road was constructed, and the name was perfectly justified; but the beauty of the pass might have suggested a name less satanic.

The valley we were now in was a broad and fine one and where we camped at night was a beautiful spot, tho grass and wood were scarce; the pine trees were behind us. The full round

moon peeping through the gap in the mountains and climbing up over the Jocko divide made an evening picture of entrancing loveliness unsurpassed on earth. The tones of a violin which were often invoked to soften disagreeable surroundings, again added pleasures to the beauties spread out before us. One tune brought out that night comes to mind clearly as I now write, long years after; appropriately enough it was a march.

Camp 86, September 8.—We made a good start in the morning and were on the road before six o'clock. Every one felt the invigorating impulse a drive through this fine valley would give. We had been told that there were settlers in the valley, they having "squatted" on land and were engaged in agricultural pursuits, and from this fact we hoped to secure grain for the animals and vegetables for ourselves. We found the valley a fertile one, abounding in everything which nature could supply with a lavish hand.

We soon reached a settlement consisting of about a dozen cabins, some of them occupied by men with white wives and children; it was a pleasure to see and meet with these people, as most men in the great interior had Indian women for wives and were known as "squaw men." This little place, like those in the Deer Lodge, had not yet arisen to the dignity of assuming a name. It was located on the river bank, near the junction of the Hell Gate and Bitter Root rivers; from this point we saw no more of the former river. The settlers were "squatter sovereigns," each one having located upon and fenced in a large tract



BITTER ROOT NEAR FORT OWEN.



of excellent land. Much of it was under cultivation. Grain and all kinds of temperate zone vegetables were raised in abundance, the soil being very productive. Here we called a halt for rest and refreshment, and to get a view of the new world we had reached. It was refreshing to breathe an atmosphere once more which surrounded an incipient city and gardens equal in vegetation to older civilized communities.

In my search for something to change or add to our bill of fare, I entered a neat little cabin and was received by a very fine appearing American woman and one could not refrain from expressing gratification at hearing the clear, delicious sound of the American language spoken by one who was not a pilgrim or a newcomer in this distant region.

This lady had fitted up her tiny log cottage neatly, considering everything, had three four-light curtained windows, fur rugs on the punch-con floor, and several raw-hide bottomed chairs and rockers. It was such a picture of rural comfort as we had not before met with on the journey.

We secured a quantity of grain and two "gunny sacks" full of fine potatoes. Nothing could be named which looked better than those tubers to our company, and in a surprisingly short time a kettle full of them was bubbling over a hot fire, and more of them were in the oven. A pail of milk was added to the list of good things, and our supper that night could not be surpassed in the swellest of clubdom.

Many other "claims" had been staked off and pioneers were coming into the valley; the ad-

vance guard thought it a matter of but a few years when a thriving settlement would grow up. They were right; a city grew almost by magic in that mountain Eden. Gold was being mined in all directions, and was known to exist in liberal quantities in localities where Indians made it too risky for miners to locate at that time. The hardy miner went in everywhere afterwards.

The road led down the bank of the beautiful Bitter Root for several miles. Fish, large and small, stocked the river abundantly, mountain trout and the big salmon, the same species as caught in the Columbia. It was a hard task, to drive on and not try to catch some of them. We passed a number of cabins and ranches, and towards evening another struggling settlement, St. Mary's. Here was a partly dismantled mill which was being removed to a more convenient location. The mill was an old Hudson Bay concern, the first ever erected in that country, but which had outlived its usefulness in that quarter. Grain was being harvested and the yield was large.

Our camp on the Bitter Root was in a place where nature had done everything the most exacting mind could wish; it was a charming and restful place. The day had been exceedingly hot, but the evening was delightful.

A short distance south of our camp were the remains of a number of cabins, called Cantonment Stevens, a winter camp of the military road builders, and named thus by Lieutenant Mullan, the engineer of the road, for General I. I. Stevens, under whom he served in his railroad exploring



HUDSON BAY MILL.

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expeditions. General Stevens, then Governor of Washington, went out in 1853-4 to survey and explore a railroad across the continent between the forty-seventh and forty-ninth parallels, and made treaties of peace with nearly all the Indian tribes in the north part of the continent under American control.

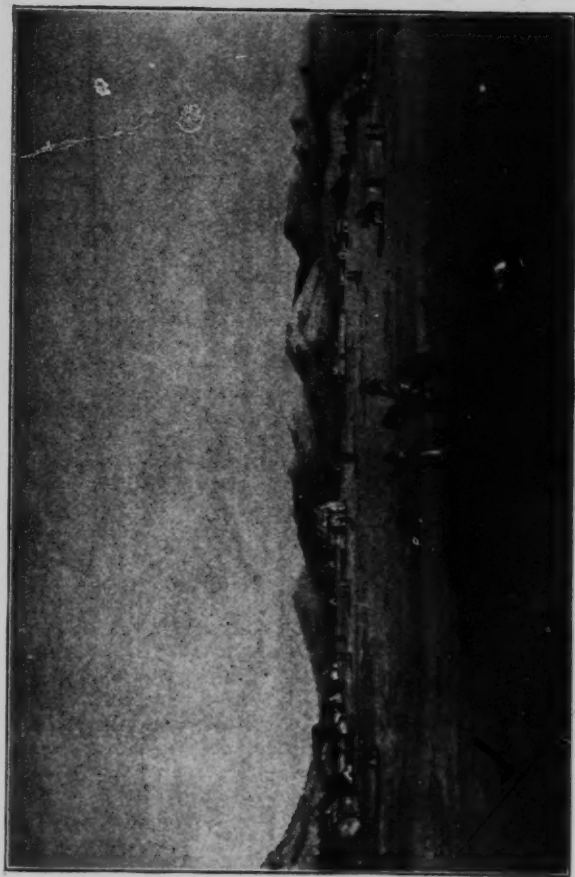
Detached bands of Indians, representing different tribes, came around our camp at various times, some from curiosity and others to beg some "tobac." A jargon, called Chinook, devised by the fur traders of an early day, to enable the whites to talk with the Indians without learning a hundred horrible guttural forms of speech which were not languages, had spread among all the tribes of the northwest; and was the universal means of communication. It contained only about two hundred and fifty words, but every one was expressive, and the accent in pronunciation gives a separate meaning, being a sort of volapuc among the aborigines. Judge Hewitt from a long residence in Washington, was well acquainted with the lingo, and when an Indian came up would hail him in that tongue; most of the Indians would reply in the same way. This was a wise policy, as the Indian always seemed to give evidence that he considered one who could use the jargon as one familiar with the Indians and the country, and not a timid stranger.

September 9.—Remained in camp over the day to recruit the mules, as the old fellows had for a few days been exhibiting evidence of being fagged. A measure of grain morning and even-

ing gave excellent results. The day, it may be assumed, was not passed in idleness. A steady wind from the north blew constantly, but not heavily enough to cause trouble; in the evening it became quite cool.

The Bitter Root valley, the old explorers and voyageurs all agreed, was one of the most lovely spots to be found on the continent, surrounded by scenery on all sides truly magnificent. It was a prairie with a gently undulating surface, of excellent soil and watered by streams of pure water. We found the valley all that was ever said about it, and in the mellow days of September it appeared at its best, offering a retreat where the most enthusiastic lover of nature could afford to end his days.

This camp of our party, on the 8th and 9th of September, 1862, was very near, if not on the spot where the flourishing city of Missoula, Montana, now stands. A city in that latitude was not among the dreams of men forty years ago. The existence of that important and growing city in a part of the country which at the time of our journey was the centre of an inland empire given over to warring bands of fierce Indians, is a pertinent evidence of the national expansion referred to in chapter six. In, or contiguous to the region we traversed after crossing the Rocky Mountains, are now the cities of Virginia, Dillon, Butte, Anaconda, Phillipsburg, Stevensville (formerly Cantonment Stevens), Helena, Wallace and Missoula, together with many other places of importance, the whole country being populated by an industrious people.



FORT OWEN—BITTER ROOT VALLEY.



Numerous railroads penetrate everywhere, and the country is growing and prosperous, abounding in gold, silver and copper, representing untold wealth.

The last camp made in the Bitter Root valley was probably in a region the most grandly beautiful of anything we had found on the whole journey, or can be found on earth. It was very near the junction of the Bitter Root—sometimes known as the St. Mary's fork—and the Hell Gate River, where both of them are as placid and orderly streams as can be imagined. When the bright, full moon rose over the Jocko Divide that night and poured a flood of silvery light into that lovely nook of the valley through a gap between two lofty ridges the scene was too sublime to be profaned by an attempt at description. The impress on the mind was of something above and beyond anything presented before and cannot be surpassed on earth.

The name of Bitter Root River and valley has been changed to Missoula.

Camp 87, September 10.—A severe frost last night formed ice over one inch thick; the air in the morning was disagreeably cold and penetrating. Daylight comes early in the north latitudes in summer, and so we were stirring at an hour when in justice we should have been snugly in bed waiting for the sun to warm the atmosphere. Doing guard duty, in such climatic conditions, must not be understood as pleasant summer evenings' enjoyment. The rays of the sun did not

operate promptly and activity became very necessary.

Soon after our march began this morning the trail passed through a strip of pine forest and over a smooth and level road until the foot of the mountains was reached; then we entered the Bitter Root range in earnest, and the road led a very winding zig-zag course, rough, rocky and in places exceedingly steep. The spurs and peaks of the mountains were thrown up in the utmost confusion, and it seemed as though the trail avoided none of them.

The mountain sides were thickly studded with stately pine and tamarac forest; the whole expanse had been burned over in some fierce fire and blackened and charred tree trunks gave abundant evidence of the severity of the flames. It must have been a fearful sight when these mountains were all ablaze. Unnumbered millions of feet of magnificent pine lumber had been burned and rendered worthless. Fires were still burning in many places a short distance from the trail, and a heated atmosphere charged with a pungent smoke was very disagreeable.

Among the mountains, where they were steep and rocky and where grass was not abundant, these forest fires not only caused emigrants much trouble, consuming everything that sustained their stock, but destroyed or drove out every animal which would serve to furnish meat. The river, so far as we had followed it, was about seventy-five yards wide, deep and swift, flowing smoothly and quietly.

Camp was perched on a high plateau on a spur



A CROSSING OF THE BITTER ROOT.



projecting from the mountains, where forage was good; water was obtained deep down in a gulch with rough walls to be clambered over to reach it. The weather moderated materially, but large camp fires added vastly to our comfort. Shut in as we had been among the cañons and peaks so long, days had elapsed when we were not favored with a view of the rising and setting sun, and we only experienced the effect of its rays a short time each day. It made the days appear much shorter than they really were.

The forest fires did not drive out from the hills all the coyotes and wolves and they made the echoes resound nearly all night, with their frightful howling.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Stupendous Mountains—Remarkable Engineering—Scenery Both Wild and Grand—Lofty Climbing—A Narrow Gorge—A Furious Torrent—Among the Clouds—The Eagle's Eyrie—Hours of Toil—On the Edge of a Cliff—Magnificent Grandeur—Great Forests—A Cold Rain—Long Roads, Short Distances—Aerial Navigation—Dangerous Slides in the Roads—Difficult Crossing—"Warping Ship"—Successful Engineering—Trees for Drags to Ease the Wagons—Report of a Gun a Flat Sound—A Pleasant Reflection—Go Higher Up the Mountains—An Abandoned Outfit—Powder Explosion—An Impromptu Salute—Walla Walla Sign Board—Cold Rain on the Mountain Top—Writing by Pine Wood Fire—A Snow Storm—Terrific Avalanche—A Costly Ferry—Indians Camp With Us.

CAMP 88, September 11.—To-day we realized what it was to be among real mountains; the title must needs be given with a pronounced accent; for there are mountains and mountains. The road was constructed along the face of the mountains and followed down the swift and turbulent Bitter Root River.

Undertaking to build a road passable for emigrants, not to mention armies and the transportation of army supplies, was a wonderful piece of engineering to attempt through such ranges as these are. We thought we had encountered some

pretty lofty and rugged mountains elsewhere in the Rocky Mountain chain; in comparison they were as foothills by the side of these stupendous piles. If any part of the scheme of opening a road through this region had been to give the emigrant an idea of colossal proportions in the works of nature and mountain elevations, it was a success beyond the dreams of ordinary mortals.

We started out as early as possible, as we fully realized that for many miles the road ahead of us was mountainous and rough beyond anything yet traversed. The scenery was the wildest ever gazed upon, and grand, if as feeble a word as that can be used to properly express anything in this amazing range of mountains. Up, up, still up, we went, winding along over a trail made barely passable by some of the larger boulders having been broken and removed, tho enough were in the way to cause all kinds of trouble, wrenching and jolting the wagons terribly, and causing the poor mules infinite misery. The gorge was narrow, its walls rocky and steep.

Up in the air the trail continued to lead until we thought we should be hidden among the clouds. Far down, hundreds of feet, rushed the Bitter Root, lashed into foam, the steep descent being obstructed by enormous boulders which had been torn loose and thrown down, obstructing the channel. Where the river entered the gorge, which had here broken through these tremendous walls of granite, had accumulated the waters of a dozen large streams and the volume had swollen to a great river, and where it dashed over the rocky obstructions in cataracts and rapids it

whirled past with a deafening noise, exactly "like the sound of many waters." The channel was deep and the current irresistible, but from our lofty pinnacle looked like a silver ribbon stretched along in waving curves through the gorge; the roar was dull and indistinct, like a tree shaken by a gentle breeze. Many miles of this bright ribbon could be traced winding through the cañon.

A pair of eagles, enormous birds, the typical emblem of ambitious American strength and fearless animation, sailed out from some hidden spot and over the chasm into space, disappearing into etherial blue beyond us.

Finally after four hours of toil we reached the summit; and then we were on a level with many surrounding mountains, all of enduring granite. From that elevated observatory we looked down on many more tremendous ridges; no matter how high we ascended there were unnumbered peaks reaching away up into the heavens far above where we were, and they appeared to frown on us for presuming to intrude into their primeval solitudes. Down below us large objects looked like mere specks and large pines like bushes. We traveled six miles on this elevated roadway, and there was brought to view, in every rod of the distance, additional wonders and panoramic beauties.

Around the points of the rocky ridges, over an almost vertical wall, the road, a narrow wagon track, had been blasted out, which left no room for careless or uncertain driving. A caravan must all move in one direction in passes like these. The Hudson has its beautiful and sublime scen-

ery; the Bitter Root its terrific, and a view of its magnificent grandeur none would ever regret having been favored with, though, perhaps, they would hesitate before entering upon the second journey to see it; at least under circumstances which took our train that way.

The descent from this mountain was steep and made rapidly with all wheels securely locked and mules held in check. The rock which composed these mountains from layers rising upward at sharp angles from both slopes, was solid and uniform, showing but few seams and fissures, evidence of tremendous upheaval in nature in some past period to place them where they are. The midday halt was on the mountain summit; the scenery on every hand was expansive and a source of wondering admiration.

The road in the afternoon was on a table, nearly as nature prepared it, parallel to the river, but far enough above it so that its roar had a musical sound. When camp was set we were on a level with many surrounding peaks; still higher towered other mountains—we were but half way up—and rough peaks looked frowningly down on us.

The mountain sides were covered with a dense forest of stately pines, and some of the trees were monsters of their kind.

Camped at an early hour; but for us the sun had already set and darkness began to gather. The animals were picketed where feed was good, and the camp was soon left to the solitude of the everlasting hills, the guards had the stars above and their camp fires. It began turning cold at

dusk, increasing as the hours passed; each individual was a kind of human thermometer and felt his vitality sink like the mercury to the bulb. Screech owls somewhere gave a weirdness to the surroundings.

By the national mile posts planted along the way we found with all our weary toil we had traveled but twelve miles during the day.

Camp 89, on a Mountain Top, September 12.—The reputation of our camp for early rising was not lessened this morning, and all were astir in good time. The atmosphere at daybreak was biting and cold with a misty haze which betokened rain. Shivering around a camp fire in a rarified air adds nothing to the satisfaction of a good breakfast, even though the perspective of a magnificent picture might demand that time be given to admiration of nature.

For nearly two miles from last camp it was a continual drag up hill, in places so steep that the mules could only hold to their work for a rod or two at a time when a heavy block had to be placed under the wagon wheels; both ascent and descent were steep, rough and sideling. After following the road around the abrupt face of a still higher mountain we came in view of the river again, still a rushing torrent, and found by the mile stones that we had made but four miles on our journey. We could imagine a rougher road, but there would not be much satisfaction in trying; of all peaks which rear their heads between the Gulf and the British boundary these mountains are easily the most stupendous. Being equipped with

wagons and mules we were indifferently prepared for aerial navigation ; curiosity and a desire to see grand scenery had been fully gratified ; there was no novelty now, but a dreary, monotonous grind.

Two breaks in the road about three miles apart seemed for a time to effectually block advance and close further progress. These threatening breaks were caused by a section of the mountain face becoming loosed far up the side of the steep, rocky slope, and sliding down had swept everything from the mountain side, trees, rocks, everything, down to the cut, which was partly in the solid rock, and the whole had plunged down into the river, making an enormous barricade backing the water so as to form a large, seething pool.

The only thing left to do was to take the wagon down that abrupt, uncertain slide, several hundred feet, and climb up the other side, back to the road, two hundred yards away. To overcome intrusive obstacles had been the principal part of our plain's education for many weeks ; when a survey of this break was made a plan was formed. Bridle paths had been trodden out around the side of the mountain above the slide, a narrow pathway at a dizzy height. Over this trail the ladies walked, carrying a few light articles of apparel that might be saved from wreck and water if the passage was unsuccessful ; all the leaders and extra animals were also taken over that way. Then a tree, well branched out, and about thirty feet in height, was cut down and lashed to the rear axle to hold the wagon steady ; the drivers held to their seats and the wheelers kept the wagon in line ; by this means, repeated

for every wagon, the descent was made to the turbulent river, which was filled with enormous boulders. It was a move fraught with danger, but was successfully accomplished in each case. At the bottom of the grade the tree drag was cut loose.

At the opposite side of the break a line had been passed down to be made fast at the end of the wagon tongue, and a team hitched to the end on top of the slide on good pulling ground. Four loaded wagons and the carriage were gotten over two breaks of this kind, by this method, without mishap, within three miles; the anxious fear of all while these perilous transfers were in progress cannot be easily described and hardly comprehended.

Two other places were successfully passed later in the day; they were not so broken, but required hard work and care. In these last two cases the inside wheel track was on solid rock, the outer track being badly broken away. To get around these a strong line was made fast to both front and rear axle, one being taken ahead and passed around a convenient tree, the other being arranged the same way in the rear. Then another line was lashed around the wagon body and reach and taken up the slope a short distance and passed once around a small tree; this was to act as a breastline, as sailors warp a ship, and also to prevent the wagon from capsizing. As the animals moved over the slide the rear line was paid out and the slack taken up by the head line, the breast line serving its legitimate purpose, easing the wagon around in safety, keeping it right side up.

It could hardly have been accomplished in better form had there been windlasses arranged for use in each place.

Having overcome these four dangerous slides within a distance of less than five miles, we had abundant reason to congratulate ourselves on our good fortune as well as skill, with few mechanical appliances. The condition of the road could not be ascertained before we entered the Bitter Root division; we learned it afterwards, however, and triumphed over all obstacles, without loosening a bolt or breaking a strap.

The best means at our command for estimating the height of the mountains we passed to-day placed them at an altitude of three to four thousand feet above the river; they seemed to become smaller as we progressed, but it may have been from comparison; we had been familiar with such lofty ranges so long.

After clearing these mountains the trail led along an elevated plateau or table high up above the river, and was as good as could be wished. On reaching a lower altitude in the afternoon respiration became much easier, as the air was not so light. On the mountain tops the report of a rifle—an effort was made to secure a few birds—had a flat sound and could not be heard far, and the course of the ball could be distinctly traced through the air by a whistling sound; down on this plateau it gave a sharp, clear sound, with a long, continuous echo among the cañons and crags.

In the afternoon we found a cart which had been abandoned by the roadside, and many arti-

cles of no further use to some company of emigrants who were struggling along over these frightful places ahead of us were scattered around. Among these things was a large can containing several pounds of damaged powder. Out of this some of us improvised a little celebration, as well as to prevent it from falling into the hands of Indians. The powder was poured along in a circular and serpentine course for a little distance, and the open can placed at the end of it; the train was fired, and it burned beautifully, and when the flame reached the can it exploded with a tremendous detonation like a well-loaded cannon. The sound of the explosion echoed and re-echoed over the river and among the mountains for a long time, finally rolling off down the river gorge and dying out in a faint sound. The noise aroused the wolves in all directions, and they voiced their astonishment by howls of immense capacity. We concluded that that powder had not been greatly damaged.

A cold rain set in about the middle of the afternoon, and it came down briskly at times, until late in the evening. We gathered much comfort from the fact that we had cleared the slides in the road before the rain commenced.

Camp was located on a table far above, but overlooking the river, at the base of a noble old pine tree which had been blighted and shivered by lightning, the first evidence we had seen of its effect in these hills.

A marker near camp indicated in words and figures that Fort Walla Walla was two hundred and ninety-five miles distant from that point.

These markers are placed at intervals of two miles; so we could correctly gauge the distances. We judged that if no serious accident should befall us we would reach that post in sixteen days. Of one accord all heartily exclaimed, "Oh, speed the time."

As camp sank to rest a cold rain was drizzling down, and the very blackness of darkness prevailed. The experience of the day crowded our record beyond limits; and as thought traced back over the ground we wondered at the record we had made. Water for camp purposes had to be "packed" a long way up a steep, rocky slope from the river, a weary task.

The notes of the day's portion of this narrative were written down by the aid of the reflection of a pine wood camp fire, long past the retiring hour. They were made on scraps of blank sheets of paper torn out of books and documents which had been thrown off the mail stages in the Sweet-water valley, with the stump of a pencil, the last bit of one in the party, and actuated by a hand almost benumbed by the cold. But for the fortunate—or otherwise, whatever the view taken of it—act of the stage driver's throwing off heavy mail matter in the Platte valley mud holes, there would have been no paper on our party on which diary could be recorded. Misfortune to one is sometimes the good fortune of another.

Camp 90, September 13.—There was little of wild hilarity exhibited as camp was aroused this morning. It had ceased raining during the night, and on the clouds being dispelled in the

morning it was revealed that while it had rained at the base of the mountain their tops were mantled white with snow. The trees about and above us were festooned in silver and were bending under the weight of "the beautiful snow."

A terrific crashing, grinding noise during the night, coming from the opposite side of the cañon, indicated that something else unusual had taken place. The crashing, cracking sound seemed to commence away up in the air and to roll down to the bed of the tempestuous river, increasing in volume and violence as it progressed, until with a tremendous and frightful crash it brought up with a thundering convulsion far below our bivouac on the mountain side. The very earth trembled with the fearful impact, and the mountains shook perceptibly from the concussion. It seemed as though an earthquake had shaken those granite piles, or the end of all things had come. The mules brayed their protest against the violent disturbance.

When the morning clouds rolled away the cause of the noise and shock was shown. The exceedingly deep fall of snow on a mountain nearly opposite our camp had become so heavy, following a rain which had softened the ground, that it started an avalanche, which coursed down the projecting side of a mountain, and carried everything before it, gathering momentum and power as it progressed, until it fairly cleaned the whole side of the great mountain as clear as a wall of a house, everything going down into the bottom of the cañon and piling up several hundred feet deep. What was on that mountain side a magnifi-

cent forest of pines in the evening was in the morning a broken, crushed and confused mass of timber in the bottom of the river cañon, mixed with miles of surface rock and boulders, which went down with the tremendous mass. It would have been the sight of a lifetime had it occurred in the early evening when we might have appreciated a view of its irresistible power and grandeur.

The effect of this change in the landscape by reason of the snow storm was wonderfully entrancing, but the change in the weather was none the less benumbing.

The road was fairly good for most of the way, crossing one mountain, but that one was conspicuously large. The ascent was gradual and easy, but the descent was steep, coming all at once. Again did tree drags serve an excellent purpose. After scaling the hill the valley at the foot of it was quite smooth and level, giving good driving-way until we reached a fork in the trail, one of the prongs being designated as a cut-off; as it had marks of wagons later than the other, we took it. It was made by a detailed company of soldiers early in the season, and may really have been a shorter way.

After passing over it we felt much like the man of whom a traveler asked the way; the answer was: "Take either road and before you are half way through you'll wish you had taken the other one." It was hilly and rough; it was abominable; it was everything that adjectives could be used against. It led through a dense forest of pines,

and was dark, besides being cold and damp from the rains of yesterday.

Finding no suitable place for lunch we drove twelve miles to the river, over which we were ferried at a cost of five dollars per wagon; the river at this point was deep, but not very swift. Camped on the north side of the river in the midst of a very fine valley covered with excellent grass and near several old half-destroyed cabins which had once been winter quarters for the road builders.

Here we received the depressing information that for a distance of eighteen miles ahead there was no feed, and that for seventy-five miles we would have trouble to find it. Our teams being worn down, feed was a prime necessity, and this kind of assurance brought dismay to our party.

A band of Nez Perces Indians camped near us to-night, and many of them watched our arrangements with an Indian's curiosity. We ostentatiously prepared guard "mount," taking especial pains to secure the mules near the wagons. These Indians were said to be very friendly towards the whites, but out of abundant precaution we made sure of our stock in case friendly relations should be declared off for any cause during the night.

These Indians, by means of the jargon and sign language, in familiar use in that region, informed Judge Hewitt that "heap Bostons"—white men, Americans—were out in the mountains prospecting or digging gold, and all were getting "tenas"—a little, some securing "hyas"—or much; but that the Blackfeet, Bannock and other treacherous Indians were troublesome, driving the miners out and murdering them when they could, and

making it interesting for the Nez Percés as well. At the ferry, we were told, also, that large numbers of packers and prospectors had, during the season, passed over the terrible trail we had just traversed, but having no wagons had met with no serious delay. It was with a modified kind of satisfaction that we learned that others were condemned to pass over that highway, even tho successfully.

Americans, as just noted, were recognized among the Indians throughout the whole northwest as "Bostons," all being designated alike. The Englishman, or any foreigner connected with the Hudson Bay Company, was a "King George Man." Guns of every grade which the Indians had become possessed of were "King George muskets." It simplified matters among the Indians, with limited comprehensions, assigning men to but two classes, and they had learned something of the different characteristics, at times displayed.

CHAPTER XXX.

Upward, Still Upward—Destruction of Timber by Fire—Leaving the Bitter Root—Crossing the "Hogs Back"—A Stumpy Road—Tall Timber—Forage Difficult to Obtain—A Steep Climb to Get It—A Runaway Mule—A Wild Ride to Catch It—Fresh Grizzly Tracks—An Exciting Occasion—A Long and Hard Return Ride—Saddle Mule Took an Involuntary Bath—A Crooked Stream—Numerous Crossings—Overtake the Company at Noon—Camp in the Narrow Roadway—Pulling Grass for the Mules—A Hard Day—Balancing the Account—The Coeur d'Alene Mountains—St. Regis d'Borgia River—Numerous River Crossings—Snow Avalanches—"Excavated" Road Through the Timber—Coeur d'Alene River—This Military Road a Problem—Eighty-seven Miles Through the Wilderness.

CAMP 91, Sunday, Sept. 14.—To reach our present camp location the trail wound in an irregular way to the summit of a heavily timbered, elevated ridge; a few openings on either side of the road, where forest fires had destroyed the timber entirely, let the sunlight down to the earth and gave opportunity to view the country we had but recently traversed. The valley behind us was a very fine one to look down upon and gave great promise of future value. The road from the top of the mountains lay almost directly down the ridge of what may be termed a "hog's back," a

long distance to the narrow valley, to the N. N. W., by an easy grade until near the bottom, when it became somewhat precipitous. There was no trouble in the drive from rocks or other obstructions, but the surface of the trail was deep with a choking dust. We were glad to get down to earth again from a road among the clouds.

The floor of the gorge—it was between two lofty timber covered ranges—was also a dense wilderness, through which the road was cut, leaving innumerable short stumps to bump over and to impede progress. The bottom was low and wet, along the edge of a swiftly running creek, and the wagon wheels sunk deep into the soft mud. Down this stream the road was opened, and crossed its meandering course many times; the more difficult crossings had once been bridged, but the structures were sadly demoralized, some of them nearly destroyed by fire, and were serious obstructions to travel.

The dense growth of timber, mainly tamarack and cedar, interspersed with tall pines, was astonishing, being so close that a corpulent person would have had difficulty in getting between them. Occasionally a ray of sunlight would work its way through an opening among the interlaced tops, but the sunlight seldom reached down to warm the earth and dry up the mudholes.

The trees were like slender spires, and so tall they seemed to vie with the mountains in striving to attain a higher elevation than the everlasting hills. There was no possibility of the trees developing in any way but upward.

A cold, damp wind blowing up through this

wilderness caused one to draw wraps closer and button up a coat to the throat. In a little clearing by the creek stood the remains of half a dozen cabins, former domiciles of the road engineers and workmen. They had been badly scorched by forest fires, which had destroyed an enormous amount of this fine timber and stripped the foliage from a vast area.

Camp was made early in the evening by a beautiful little side creek, at the eighteen mile marker, about which we were informed on the day before, where forage could be had by searching for it among the thick underbrush and fallen timber; it was a laborious matter to obtain feed and secure enough for evening demand. A big camp fire in a spot where it could not spread and do further damage made things appear bright enough to be pronounced gratifying.

Camp 92, Sept. 15.—Last night Judge Hewitt had been out skirmishing before darkness drove him back to camp, in search of better foraging ground, and a long way up the mountain slope among great boulders, underbrush and a tangled mass of fallen timber, he had found it. At 4 o'clock in the morning, just as day dawned, the men of the party turned out, and each took his number of mules and started for the place high up the mountain side where the pasturage was to be found. I had gathered up the lariats of my two mules, and at the request of Goodrich had kicked the stake of one of his animals out of the ground; there was no thought but that the animal would follow the rest of the band; but it seemed

it didn't; it had decided otherwise in its mulish mind.

When the animals had grazed and the party in charge returned to camp preparatory to resuming the journey, one mule was missing, the one I had been requested to turn loose. A little observation revealed the fact that the perverse thing had immediately taken the back track—in obedience to a law of the mule creation to go backward instead of forward—and disappeared. The distance between footprints in the deep dust showed that the animal had started on a lope at once, the stake at the end of the lariat touching the ground about once in twelve feet. I mounted old Tom, the best riding animal in the herd, and without waiting for breakfast started back after the runaway in hot pursuit, tho at great disadvantage in time. I was dressed exceedingly light, and as to side arms had only a pocket knife with me.

The ride was a long one, clear over the mountains to the camp of the day before, about fifteen miles or more. Going back over the "hog's back" the mule which was being ridden shied, snorted, worked his big ears and gave evidence of great fear, occasionally giving voice to a bray which awakened the early mountain echoes. The reason of his terror was soon revealed, when the immense imprints of the feet of a grizzly bear were shown in the deep dust where he had pushed his way into the road from the thicket on the side. Soon another track was shown, as large as the first, made by one of the same household, no doubt, and both were very fresh. This was not an especially enlivening outlook, and the rider,

as he remembers it, did not feel very much more hilarious than did the mule; but the animal acted grandly. Now, if there is anything with less real joy in it to man or beast, it is the expectation of meeting a grizzly bear in the place of his nativity and familiar with the country; but the prospect of meeting two grizzlies materially lessened what real joy the first one may have occasioned; besides, I was not hunting grizzlies that eventful morning.

These bears had evidently trailed the stray mule, but the latter being fleet-footed and in haste had gotten away, for all animals have a reputation for getting away from bears, especially the grizzly family; a grizzly bear fears nothing on earth. After about two miles the tracks disappeared, the big beasts having again taken to the timber. My mule heaved a sigh of relief, which sounded like the blast of a fog horn, and raced down the mountain trail for dear life. The rider could add nothing to the din, so remained quiet and clung to the saddle. The derelict was sighted at the feeding ground of the day before, and the two mules indulged in mule talk, until after much maneuvering the stray was caught and the long lariat made fast to the horn of the saddle.

The return trip over that mountain was entered upon in a far from pleasant frame of mind. One does not seek opportunities to look grizzlies in the face, but the trip was made as quickly as circumstances would permit. Passing the bear tracks caused the two mules a little uneasiness, but fortunately for all the big brutes had other

engagements to fill, which prevented them from meeting us that morning.

The final serious culmination of that dreary and well-remembered ride occurred at the bottom of the grade on the back track. The cold mountain stream zigzagged down the cañon, crossing the trail every few rods. There being a good bridle path along the bank not crossing the creek at all, the animals took it and loped down at a good pace. At one bend in the creek where the path narrowed, the captured mule, with the perversity again of its kind, sheered square across, and being fast to the saddle of the riding animal, that one missed his footing and was dragged down the embankment about ten feet and rolled completely over in the bed of the stream. I slipped out of the saddle in time to avoid an involuntary cold bath, which might have been taken, perhaps, under my mule, with unpleasant results.

The old fellow, one of the kindest animals which ever crossed the Rocky Mountains or worked under saddle, stood a moment on the edge of the pool and looked the most woe-begone of all the mule creation; he cast a pitiful look around, then up at me and gave a long mournful bray, which spoke with almost human feeling as expressive of his forlorn situation.

I delayed a little to brush off the saddle and rearrange the girth. A short ride further and the camp ground was reached, but the company had gone on, apparently thinking that when the absentees returned they would follow along and overtake the main party somewhere down the

road. About noon the train was overtaken, animals and rider pretty thoroughly exhausted, from a breakfastless thirty-five mile ride through a country and under circumstances one does not select when out for a pleasure excursion. A resolution was adopted unanimously to turn no more mules loose under such circumstances.

The roads to-day were so nearly like those of yesterday that little could be added to the record. The creek we were following flows to the east and becomes a material affluent to the Bitter Root River. In the space of fourteen miles we crossed the creek twenty-eight times, nineteen over bridges—all of them unsafe—and made nine bad fords. When the road was first made the creek was bridged in each place by a substantial structure with easy approaches; but one of the bridges was destroyed by fire, which was still burning, and others had been washed away by floods. The immense quantity of driftwood piled up at each crossing attested the fact that this innocent looking little rivulet at this season, at times becomes a raging mountain torrent. Some of these drifts were made up of very large trees which had been uprooted and carried with the flood until they became anchored in the short bends of the stream. The stream took a constantly meandering course from side to side of the cañon, nowhere having a straight run.

We occupied the narrow roadway to-night as a camp ground, the tent being pitched on the wagon track, with scant room to pass by the side of it. The floor was deeply carpeted with fir and cedar boughs for sleeping mattresses. The tim-

ber now was chiefly tamarac, fir and a few cedars, pine apparently having given way to the more aggressive kinds. At the best the place was gloomy and dismal.

Not a blade of grass could be found near the track, but isolated tufts were scattered among the thickly growing trees up the abrupt mountain side. Mulberry trees by the side of the cut afforded a little indifferent forage, a poor substitute for grass. To get some of these bunches of grass Miss Ellen and I clambered round among the fallen trees and boulders and plucked handfuls and threw it down to the mules, which lined up by the track, watching our movements, waiting patiently for the grass, and ate it with relish. We permitted this congenial task to occupy nearly two hours of our time. The mules alone did not enjoy all the pleasure of the evening.

By kindness and attention I had made a friend of every mule in the train, and they all took pains to express their friendship in their homely mule way, which amply repaid me for all my services to them.

A bright camp fire preserved these forest depths from being entirely cheerless, and by the light of it at midnight, the annals of the day were made up. It had been a long, wearisome day to me, nearly twenty hours of hard experience, but I balanced the account by the two-hour search for grass, as previously recorded.

Camp 93, Sept. 16.—Broke camp at an early hour this morning and started on the march in

hope of finding better forage than brush and leaves; by considerable exertion good feed was found about noon; it was growing in abundance among the dead and fallen timber. It was with no enduring pleasure that the members of the party ate a hearty breakfast and enjoyed a cup of delicious coffee, while realizing that our faithful animals were getting nothing more than dry brush to nibble.

By laboriously clambering up the steep side of the mountain over and around all sorts of obstructions and through a mat of underbrush, we gathered sufficient grass to furnish the animals with a good combination breakfast and dinner; they had been rather near fasting for twenty-four hours.

Since leaving the Bitter Root River we had been traveling among the Coeur d'Alene Mountains, following the cañon of the St. Regis de Borgia River. To reach the summit of the forest pass which we were traveling through we ascended gradually for four miles and crossed the divide at 8:30 in the morning, still driving through a dense wilderness. The descent was very steep, so the trail was made to curve from west to north to get easier grade. The road was exceedingly bad, the two wagon tracks being near a forty-five degree slope; down this steep grade it was dangerous for a wagon to go with all wheels locked. Again a resort to a bushy young tree as a drag enabled us to get all the wagons down safely.

This divide is noted on the mile post as being distant from Fort Walla Walla two hundred and

forty-six miles. Because of the difficult roads we had to traverse we had made only about sixteen miles a day for the past three days.

We crossed the river we had been following since entering the forest eight times before reaching the summit, making thirty-eight crossings in all. West of the divide we followed down another stream, a branch of the Coeur d'Alene River, for six miles, crossing it twenty-seven times in that distance, twice by bridge; the other times by rough fords, for the most part; besides this the road crossed many bad sloughs, over which long corduroy bridges had been built; for a long distance these log ways had been built on hillsides. After these difficult places were safely passed we reached the main Coeur d'Alene River.

It did seem that some of these rocky places and steep pitches might have been improved on. Great forest fires had spread over these mountains and valleys also, desolating thousands of acres and destroying untold millions of feet of valuable timber. Much of the dead timber had fallen into the river, choking it for miles. At one place the snow had become loosened and swept down in an avalanche from the mountain tops, bearing everything before it, piling up an enormous mountain of debris in the river.

Cedars grow to an immense size in this valley, one near our camp measuring over ten feet in diameter: there were many of the same kind. Camp was located in the road again to-night, with evergreen branches for a carpet in the tent and mattresses for sleeping.

Channels had been cut along through the tops of the numerous stumps in the roadway, about the width of the wagons, in order to mitigate the jolting; that helped some, but there was enough of the stumps left to make very rough wheeling.

The sun was not much in evidence to-day, being shut out by the dense forest, which was so thick overhead as to be practically impenetrable.

Two big camp fires served to modify a cold, penetrating atmosphere and take the place of the moon and stars which were shining somewhere in the outer world during the nights we were shut up in the black forest.

Camp 94, Sept. 17.—The morning commenced cold and dreary, but we were in marching order at an early hour. Our experiences on the trail yesterday were repeated to-day to the full. Over long sections of corduroy foundation with the convex side of a large split log up, stumps more than a foot in height, stones and bridges innumerable, we pounded along until it seemed that everything would be shivered to atoms. Part of the way the road was in the bed of the swiftly running stream. The evergreen forest was so dense that one could not get two feet off the road, which had been hewn through it almost like chopping away a solid bulkhead of wood.

To make this cut—and nothing so much resembled a railway tunnel—the trees had to be cut off as low down near the roots as the axeman could work; then lines and pulleys would be brought into use and the trees pulled over in the narrow open space, chopped up and burned where they

lay, or perhaps "snaked" to some opening and disposed of there. Opening this highway was a big undertaking and well executed, but its value as a "military" road was problematical. Many of the trees were so slender as they shot up to get the rays of the sun, that they hardly had strength to sustain the bushy tops if standing separate, and bent over, forming an arch, the tops resting on the ground at the bottom. Numbers of these drooping tree tops had to be removed to-day before our train could get through, and the labor involved was very considerable. Some of the party grumbled at the hard conditions imposed to make the passage, and some said hard things in regard to the road; but making remarks removed no obstacles and hard work had to be resorted to. Not once during the entire day were we favored with a ray of sunshine. The drive for miles was continuously dark and damp, without a single redeeming attraction. Fortunately we had no mountains to surmount nor cuts around points of ridges along threatening precipices to pass, the road being all the way down grade following the river.

Stopping at noon in this dismal causeway and endeavoring to pull a few bunches of grass for the animals was like trying to overcome the impossible; it was merely wasting an hour of valuable time. To-day we made nineteen crossings of the main river and forded ten rapidly running branches. Some of the bridges were in bad condition, and all were dangerous, while the fords were rough, impeded with large boulders and

driftwood, a similar condition existing all through the deep forest.

Toward evening we emerged from these gloomy recesses of this black forest, wherein we had been incarcerated for many days, and camped on the rim of Coeur d'Alene valley, a pretty little spot, indeed, with bright skies above us and handsome mountains around us, in company with another train of emigrants which had preceded ours by two days.

For eighty-seven miles our road has been through this gloomy wilderness, and it was pleasing beyond expression to be in an open space once more. The information that had been given in regard to this northern route being the shorter and best was a disappointing reality and we learned the truth at serious cost and disadvantage, much too late to be of any use to us.

But while the mules were buried to the tips of their ears in luscious grass we sat around a good camp fire and congratulated ourselves that the terrors of that forest passage were in the past.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Taking Needed Rest—Escaped from the Wilderness

—Coeur d'Alene Prairie—A Lovely Locality—
Indians Numerous—Well Mounted and Armed—
A "Moving" Picture—Miners Fleeing from
Indians—Mines Reported Good—A Pleasant
Camp Ground—Rough Roads Ahead—Canoe In-
dians—A Pretty Scene—Coeur d'Alene Indian
Mission—Great Work of Catholic Missionaries—
A Fine Establishment—A Large But Peaceable
Tribe—Camp Near the Mission—Visited by
Many Indians—Not a High Grade of the Lo
Family—An Aboriginal Adonis—Miss Ellen
Makes a Deep Impression—An Indian Admirer
—Tries to Buy Her for a Wife—The Indian
Method—A Humorous Episode—Good Result
from the Priest's Work.

CAMP 94, Continued, September 18.—Before camp settled down to quietness and slumber last night it was decided to remain where we were over to-day, among the pine trees, for the benefit of all concerned, but chiefly for the advantage of the animals. They had passed through a severe strain for many days and needed the refreshing strength which could be obtained from the luscious grasses found in this beautiful little valley. They were all turned loose and allowed the full and unrestricted range of the prairie, a privilege they fully improved, tho their long lariats were first well secured around their necks, and a

watchful eye kept on the lookout to the end that none of them took a notion of going back over that dismal forest trail.

When the sun came up out of the hazy atmosphere which hung heavily over the mountain peaks all around, it warmed things up and improved matters better than we had experienced for several days. The tent had not been really dry for days, and the sun's rays soon started the steam from it.

Bands of Indians had been quite numerous for the previous ten days, meeting or passing our party every few hours. They were largely of the Coeur d'Alene tribe, or nation, tho we frequently saw bands of Nez Percés. The bands appeared to be made up of families with troops of children and dogs—for what would an Indian encampment be without a pack of noisy dogs.

These Indians were all well supplied with ponies—Cayuse, in this country—and many of them were really fine animals, though a "watch-eye" in many of them was a serious blemish in the mind of a horseman. The Indians were well armed also, having the best and latest improved guns to be had, knives and tomahawks, all of English make, supplied by the Hudson Bay Company, in the traffic for skins. Americans were forbidden by the law to furnish guns or ammunition to Indians, under severe penalties, but they secured what they wanted without difficulty from foreign traders, and generally were much better armed than were the emigrants. If a modern gun was to be had an Indian found it if within his means to secure.



NEZ PERCES CHIEF.



To-day another band of the wandering nomads passed our camp and halted near our tent to rearrange their transportation arrangements. It seemed to be a part of a tribe which was changing its abode, perhaps for the winter, as the ponies not used by the bucks for riding were all loaded with the household goods of "poor lo," until little of the animals could be seen but their ears. The poles for the tepees were lashed to the sides of the ponies, and on them were loaded the family belongings and on top of the whole would be surmounted the squaws and their papooses. The Indian moves his habitation whenever it pleases him to do so, and it is a matter evidently which causes him little concern. We watched with some interest the disposition made of the youngsters by the mothers. The papooses were wrapped up in fur robes or a portion of a "U. S." blanket, like a bale of goods and then lashed to a board rived from a cedar log, or to a piece of bark, and made fast to the pack on the pony; or if two papooses they would be secured together and hung across the animal's back. They were perfectly stoical, submitting without a murmur, and when ready for a ride were comical little objects. Anything that might be, by a stretch of the imagination, termed a smile on an Indian face, old or young, I have yet to see.

The bucks were all robust and hearty, of good stature, and not especially villainous looking, judging from the portion of their countenances which could be seen through the red paint and yellow ochre smeared over them; the squaws looked otherwise; they were undersized, low-

browed, dirty and repulsive ; there was not a good looking one in the whole outfit, so far as any of them was within our observation. The whole band doubtless had the Interior Department "amity" habit, but none of them were allowed to get close enough to our portable personal property to become attached to it ; we had further use for our belongings.

A number of miners, stragglers from "diggins" in the mountains south and west of this point came into the valley to-day, bringing with them what effects they had been able to gather previous to a hurried flight, and camped near where we were located. They reported that predatory bands of Indians, belonging principally to the Blackfeet, Bannock and Snake tribes, had been making raids on mining camps scattered through a large district, stealing stock, robbing the miners of their provisions and murdering the miners where resistance was offered ; that the miners, being in small gatherings and long distances apart, were at the mercy of the blood-thirsty savages and could not effectually protect themselves so that great numbers had been obliged to leave their mines and go where it was safer. The general consensus of opinion was that the Indians did not want the gold dust, but that they did have a yearning for the miners' horses and provisions and scalp locks ; besides did not want the whites intruding in their reservations and hunting grounds.

These men all reported the mines as being quite good and declared their intention of return-

ing to them as soon as it was safe to do so, and would probably "even up" on "poor Lo."

Camp 95, September 19.—An early morning movement in our camp was inaugurated to enable us to make as much of a drive to-day as possible. We left a large number of people, emigrants, trappers, packers and refugee miners in camp, who had located for the night near where we were, none of them intending to go far in our direction. The Indian contingent all disappeared before nightfall. It was a warm and pleasant morning, and a good distance was covered by noon, and then we went into camp in an open-timbered, shady spot, to remain the rest of the day and over night. From this point, we were informed, we had fifty miles of pretty rough country to go over, and the available camping places would be about a day's journey apart; that is, providing the train moved out each morning at a reasonably early hour and met with no mishap which would occasion delay.

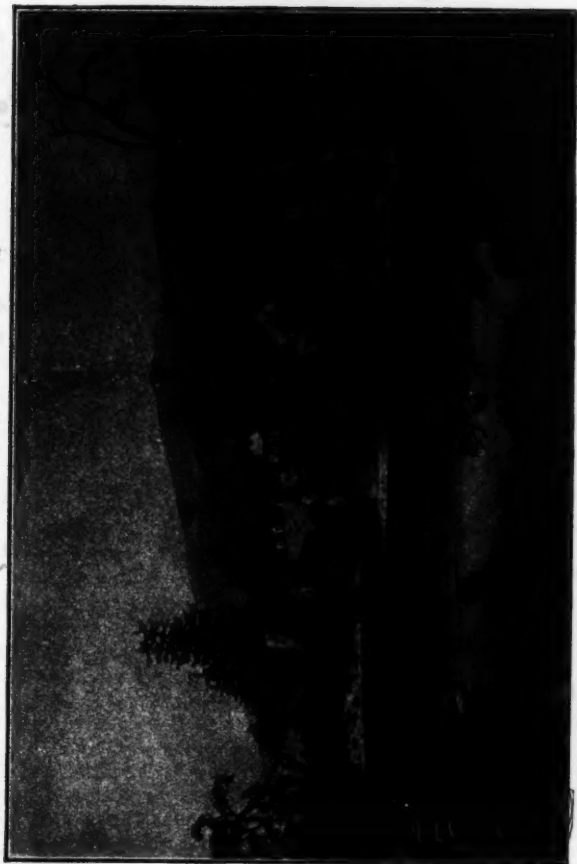
The pasturage was scant, but as the animals had about eighteen hours ahead to browse and rest in it was quite evident they would be well served in the end. The river took a long sweep to the northward at our starting point in the morning, the trail going direct across the prairie valley; the roads were very good, the land rolling and timber scattering; there were no creeks to cross. We forded the river by a smooth and easy crossing just before going into camp at noon. At this point the trail leaves the river and we will see no more of it.

At or near the ford was assembled a fleet of canoes—canims in the jargon—the first of the kind we had seen on the journey; one Indian paddled his craft down the current of the river, gliding along rapidly and silently, giving the picture an air of romance that came nearer to the Leather Stocking series of Cooper than any panorama yet presented to our observation.

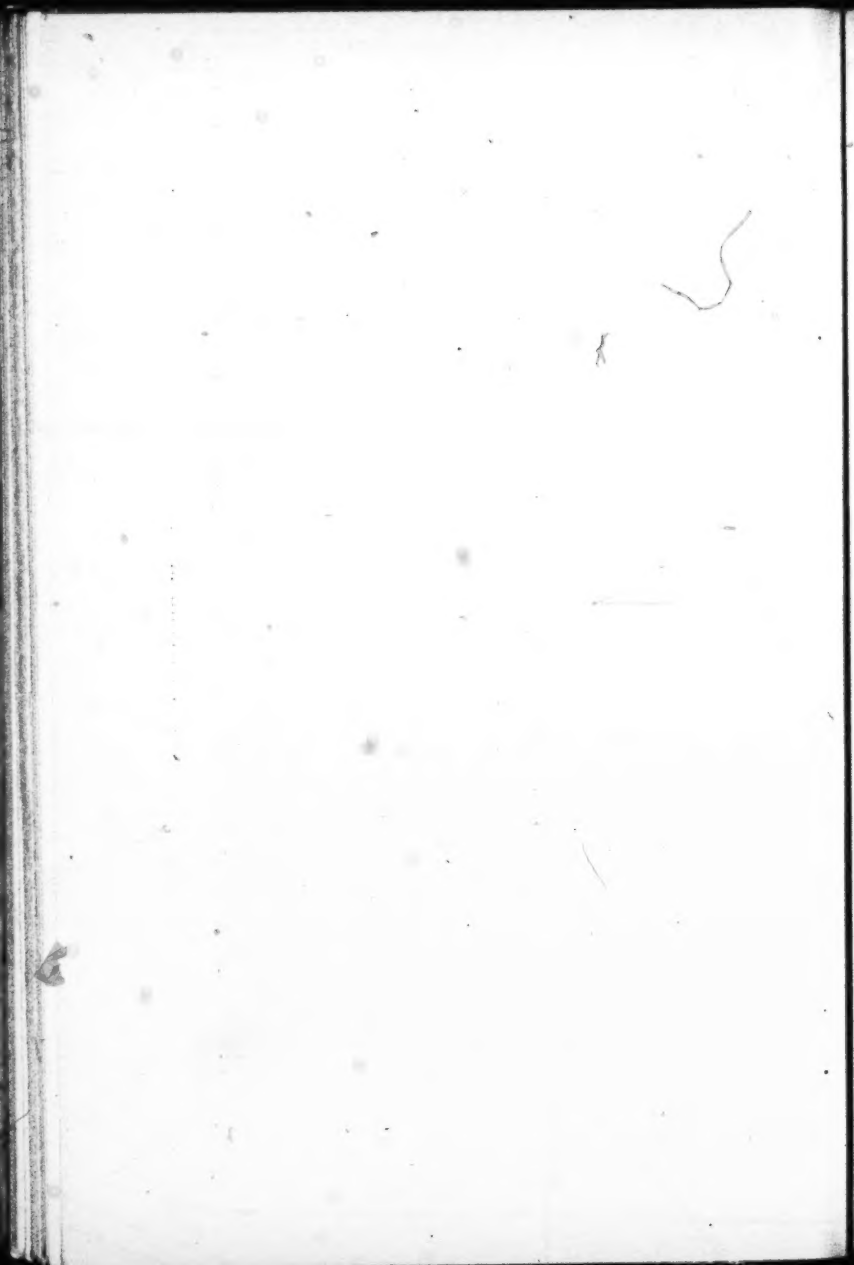
The dusky occupant handled his paddle with skill, showing that he was well practiced in canoeing. The native inhabitants of this region were known as "canoe Indians," they using the numerous rivers for their transportation routes, and were not owners of large herds of horses, as were many of their neighboring tribes. A light draft stern wheel steamboat could navigate a considerable portion of this river without difficulty.

An hour before noon we passed the group of buildings which constituted the Coeur d'Alene Mission, an institution founded, as were many similar ones, at an early period by the mission fathers of the Roman Catholic Church. These self-sacrificing priests had gone out among the savage tribes long before the white man had thought of penetrating these mountain wilds, and built churches, dwellings and other mission buildings, and lived and labored with the Indians and succeeded, in a great measure, in bringing about a semi-civilization among the tribes that were not given over to eternal warfare against everything that happened to get in their way, even taming down many of those who seemed only born to be fighters and scalp hunters.

The church building, while not being a preten-



COVER D'ALENE MISSION.



tious architectural edifice, was still a well-devised and strongly built structure. The architecture was by the Catholic fathers, who supervised and directed the work, which was performed almost entirely by the Indians; in that light it was a deserving work of merit. All the other buildings which constituted the mission were built under like circumstances, designed and supervised by the priests. Near the mission buildings was a large enclosure, in which the priests successfully raised a variety of vegetables; some grain was also raised for flour; a few deciduous fruit trees appeared to be thriving.

About this mission scattered in promiscuous confusion were many huts occupied by Indians; they were uniformly in wretched condition, sadly in need of repairs and gave forth odors which would have outranked a police court room when at its best, or an old time fish market. The thrift and energy of the aborigines must assuredly have been directed in other channels than keeping up an attractive village. The occupants of these huts came out in great numbers to greet us as we passed. The resident priests came out to speak with the judge, gave him a cordial welcome and assured him that he could locate wherever he chose in perfect security, as not an Indian would molest him or in any manner disturb his property.

The tribe numbered several hundred, most of the men being out hunting and fishing; a necessary thing for their living. The entire line of the male generation who were at home came out to see our train, and they were as grotesque an

array of beings as was ever seen. Many of them were clothed in parts of cast-off military uniforms mixed in with genuine Indian finery, much resembling a band of painted and highly decorated fusileers out on a holiday. The garb in which fiction clothes the noble red man is far different from the dress in which we found him, in his normal condition.

In real life the Indian of fact and of fancy, of reality and romance, are two widely different characters. The women, as is usually the case with savage tribes, were inferior to the men, and there were none of them very prepossessing.

Scarcely had the tent stakes been set when our camp was thronged with all kinds of Indians, big and little, old and young, male and female, nearly all mounted on ponies of various grades and style of beauty.

All of the Indians were eager to trade such articles as they had, peas and potatoes—wappatoes in Chinook—for powder, shot, salt, soap and trinkets, no money being required in the transaction. By their asking for salt we were forcibly reminded of the fact that we had not seen a salt spring or marsh for about a month, and therefore concluded that the saline element was wanting in this region. The request for soap was a legitimate one—they all needed it, and appearances indicated that it was seldom applied, or that there was a corner in the soap market.

The potatoes were luxuries to our party; the peas were ripe and hard and of small use.

In the evening after camp fires were lighted, our Indian friends came down again, accom-

panied by all their uncles, sisters, cousins and aunts. Our traveling companion took out his violin and played several lively airs, whereat the natives exhibited great delight, such melodies doubtless being a new thing to them. They hopped around like jumping jacks, in a crude instinctive effort to keep time. One of them offered his handsome pony, which he valued at one hundred dollars—and that was great wealth in the valley—in exchange for the fiddle. During the afternoon Miss Ellen unconsciously made a deep impression on a dusky Adonis. The young lady was busily attending to her part of camp duty, but occasionally took interested notice of something appearing peculiar among our visitors. She attracted the attention of one of the masculines of the tribe—who seemed to be some sort of a superior being among them, judging from his picturesque appearance—and he kept his eyes on her constantly. He was togged out in fine style and was resplendent in eagle feather war bonnet, eagle claws, paint, beads and buckskin, and all other conceivable Indian trappings; he was, in fact, a perfect specimen of the aboriginal dude, and was mounted on a magnificent horse, which was also gaily accoutered. He was undoubtedly badly smitten, and cast many admiring glances at the lady; the "tender passion," in an Indian's conception, actuates all alike, beyond question.

Finally he could resist the temptation no longer, and approaching the judge found out who the lady was connected with and opened negotiations for her purchase, the usual method an Indian adopts for getting a wife. After a little parley-

ing in the meager Chinook jargon, he exclaimed: "Nika potlatch hyu dolla wpa tenas kloutchman"—which means, when translated—"I will give you many dollars for your girl." The generous offer was refused, whereat the noble red man was greatly disappointed, and showed it, as he appeared to be very much in earnest and presumably much in need of a wife, or an additional one; a white one would greatly enhance the attraction of his "wickiup."

After further parleying, the judge, in a humorous mood, raised the price on him and demanded some of his handsome "cuitans"—horses—in addition; but the red man refused to advance and the young lady lost the only opportunity she ever had of becoming the blushing bride of a high-bred native of the forest. The disappointed swain no doubt thought that as all things have a valuation, so there ought to be a price and an opportunity to purchase. The lady never afterward heard what effect this refusal had on her dusky admirer.

This was one of the very few humorous episodes in our wearisome journey. For years afterwards the lady in the case enjoyed an occasional reference to the occurrence as one of her original conquests.

Our camp was located about a third of a mile to the right of the mission buildings, as shown in the illustration on opposite page, a lovely spot shaded by spreading trees, on the edge of a meadow covered with good grass. It was at this place that the episode recounted above took place, where the noble red man's heart went out to the



BARGAINING FOR A WIFE.



pale-face daughter, and where, perhaps, he met his first refusal.

During the evening two of the priests from the mission visited our camp and passed a pleasant half hour; they gave us some valuable information in regard to the trail and the condition of the road from this point to Walla Walla, and the intervening country, the Coeur d'Alene Mountain region, and its native inhabitants. These priests were very polite and affable and entertained us with a brief story of their experience in early times among the Indian tribes. They had been shut away from all civilization for about fifty years, seldom visiting in the civilized sections, laboring with the Indians continuously and enjoyed the self-imposed isolation and the tasks involved. Their earnest sacrifice had been productive of good results. The fathers were by birth Frenchmen, and their language was difficult to understand, but in their simple manner they made their meaning clear. The good work they had accomplished among the Indians was apparent on every hand. The Coeur d'Alenes and all the neighboring tribes, even the untamed Blackfeet, gave evidence of advancement and a material change in a former wild and murderous career. The offices of the priests were exerted for peace and good will.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A Dismal Rainy Morning—Tenting in the Deep Forest—Climb the Mountain for Forage—"Arkansaw Traveler"—The Equinoxes—Drenching Rain—Rough Roads—Bad Creek—A Magnificent Pine Forest—Pine and Cedar Mattresses—Roads Worse Than Ever—Out of the Wilderness at Last—Coeur d'Alene Lake—Beautiful Sheet of Water—Indian Burial Ground—A Visit from Miners—Our Companion's Horses Failing—Fording the Spokane River—A Rough Experience—Camp at Spokane Falls—Then and Now—Spokane in 1862—Again in 1902—A Retrospect—Road Turns South—A Terrible "Stone Meadow"—The Blue Mountains—The Century Mark.

CAMP 96, September 20.—Soon after daybreak—and morning light came slowly into that dense wilderness—it commenced raining, and breakfast was prepared over a sputtering fire, heavy with soggy wood and stifling with pitch pine smoke. The anxiety in the minds of all to get through to the end of a journey which was gradually wearing out what little stock of patience and endurance any member of the company had at command, prompted us, as soon as there were signs of the rain ceasing to strike our tent, pack up and move on; by seven o'clock we were on the way. But the storm increased instead of diminishing; it was necessary to halt and another camp location

was sought for. As we were then in a deep pine forest, finding any sort of a camp ground was not an easy matter.

At four miles out we came to a halt and pitched our tent again, in a space by the roadside barely large enough to accommodate it, which we had first cleared of logs and brush, and put up the canvas house in a pelting storm. In the road and fronting the tent just far enough removed to avoid scorching it, a big fire was started to dry things out, and we tried hard to call it comfortable, under circumstances which had enough disagreeable elements surrounding to try the patience and courage of the elect. There was no fear of that fire communicating with the timber and spreading to do injury.

Every member of the party immediately started in to do some sort of work, that kind of exercise being needed as a safety valve, so to speak, to avoid complaint or repining, for with slight paraphrasing it was concluded,

"We'll stand the storm, it won't be long,
We'll leave here by and by, etc."

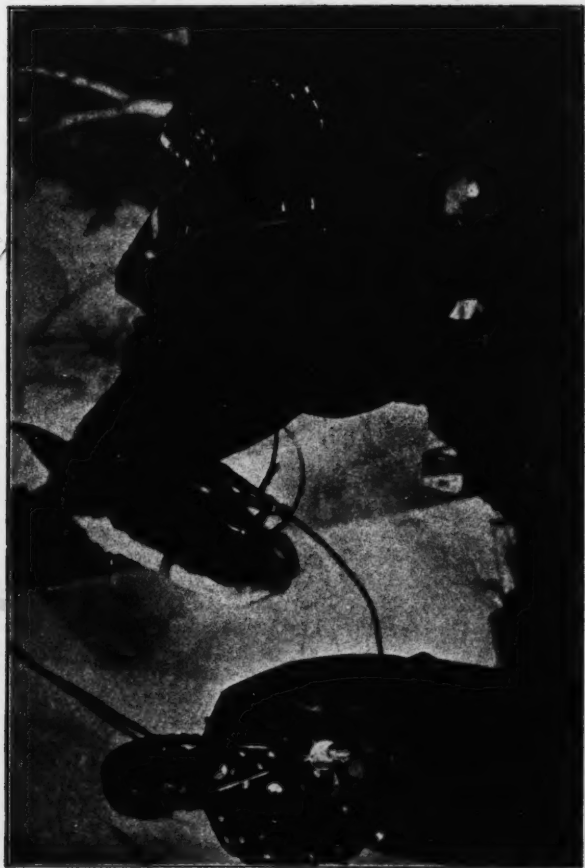
Feed in great abundance was found some distance up the steep mountain sides where the mules were taken, along difficult and irregular paths. Mules and men were pretty thoroughly drenched when they returned to camp; but the mules were satisfied, however. I amused myself and added a comfort to the others by cutting cedar and pine boughs, when I returned to camp, drying them by the camp fire to make a mattress floor for the tent.

Our neighbor, the gentleman with the violin, climbed into his covered wagon, tuned up his instrument and entertained himself and others by bringing out a few jigs, and quite appropriately the "Arkansaw Traveler;" the rain part of that old quick-step fitted our condition. Music will soothe when other things fail.

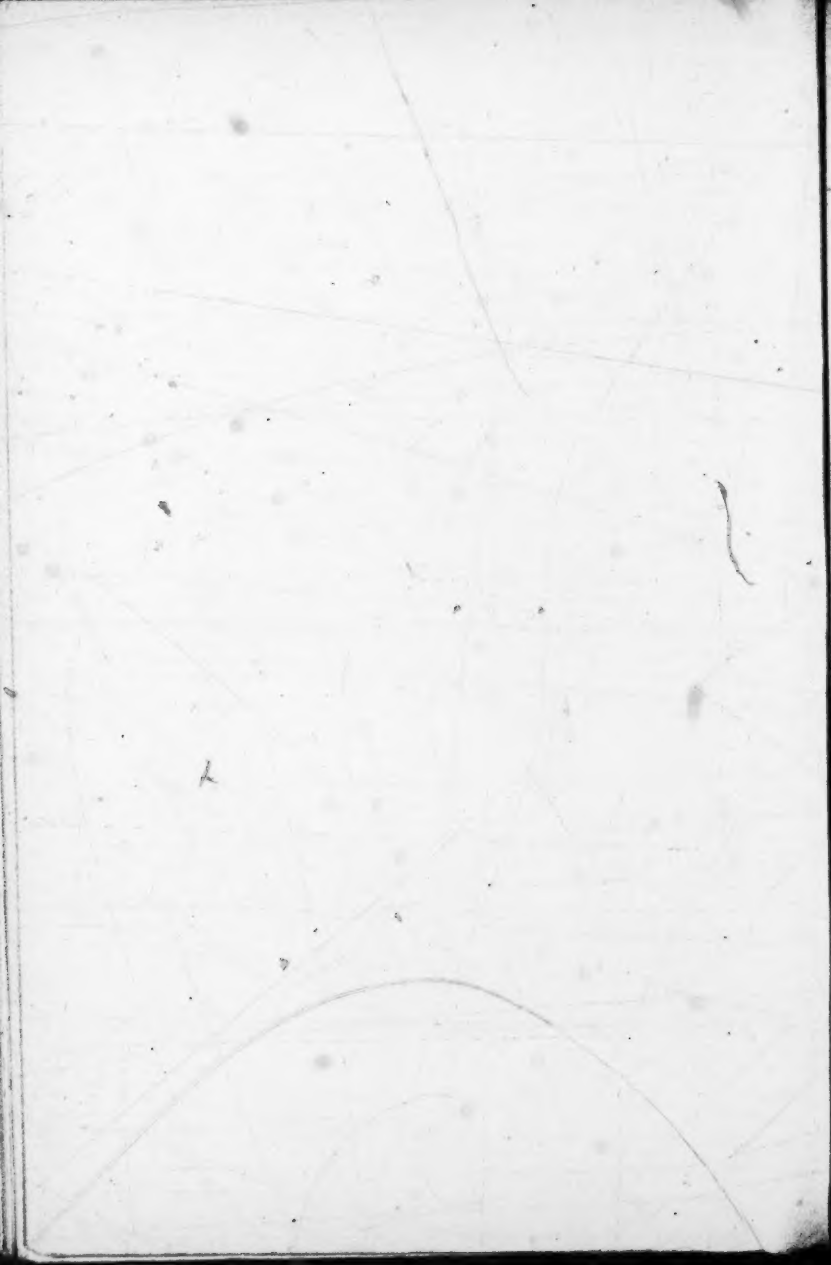
It ceased raining soon after dark, but the souging of the wind through the tops of the forest of tall pines made doleful music that night, even to ears long accustomed to all manner of discordant sounds. One gets used to sleeping soundly under all circumstances after a little experience.

This is the period of the equinoxial storms in civilized countries where records are kept and almanacs referred to for weather predictions and carefully studied. How far the equinoxes affected that forest region we found it impossible to figure out, as information of that kind can hardly be obtained from the only kind of guide we possessed, a poor apology of a map. It was presumed that Sol "crossed the line" here as elsewhere; we only knew it rained and rained and rained.

Camp 97, September 21.—The rain which had ceased falling during the early part of last night commenced again before morning and descended so liberally that everything not already soaked was thoroughly saturated. It was still coming down, cold and penetrating, when we moved out in the early morning hours, as our forcibly selected camp ground was no longer tenable. Everything was bedraggled and everybody was morose



FLAT HEAD SQUAW.



and discouraged; but of course it would not be well to let this latter condition last. The rain continued intermittently all day, and the feelings of the company were regulated considerably by the weather conditions.

The roads, not overly good in the first instance, were rendered much worse by becoming soft and slippery because of the continued fall of water; we jogged along at a slow pace and in a dejected manner. We had to cross seven different creeks, all running like torrents, and increasing hourly in flow from the addition of the rainfall; the last creek was forded ten times, with sharp, steep banks on either side. Three very heavy mountain spurs intervened between the torrents, and all were difficult to scale, being abrupt on both flanks, rocky in places, muddy and slippery. In ascending these spurs it was necessary for some one to walk beside the wagon and most of the time carry a large rock—they were not always at hand when wanted—to block the wheels when the teams stopped to rest and gain breath; it was carrying a big rock up a hill to prevent a wagon from rolling down. The lock chains were sufficient to ease the wagons down these grades without being obliged to resort to the tree drag.

From the summit of one of these intermediate mountains a grand view was had of an extended pine forest covering the cañons and mountain sides with a magnificent growth of timber, tall and stately, clear of all blemish to the branches at the leafy top. The sight of these pine trees would have made a Michigan man's heart leap with joy.

At the first open section we found where any

kind of camp requirements were available; we halted and located shortly after noon, to remain for the night, on the bank of a creek about ten yards wide. The atmosphere was cold and disagreeable; the ground wet and muddy. A quantity of pine and cedar branches again insured comfortable sleeping quarters.

Camp 98, September 22.—Bid camp ground adieu at an early hour and started on our way. The first thing was to cross the creek by which we had passed the night, on a long and uncertain bridge. As saw mills were not part of the road builder's equipment, bridges and all other structures erected by them were of logs of nearly uniform size; this bridge, as were many others, was made of pine logs, and as the creek was deep down between the banks it required long timbers to make the foundation piers; some of these had been carried away by flood water, leaving the superstructure weak and unreliable. After a careful inspection a safe passage was guaranteed us, however, and we moved on.

From the creek crossing the road was up and down over a succession of ridges which were much higher than mere hills. To gain the top of the first spur the road was long and winding, leading a long distance around to gain a short distance across. Barring land slides even, which had carried the wagon grade entirely away, as among the Bitter Roots, this section of road on the mountain side was infinitely worse than anything yet experienced. It was sliding, slippery and rocky, with big boulders projecting so far

over the driveway that it was necessary to drive around them on a side hill grade where every wagon came dangerously near rolling, animals and all, to the bottom of the steep gorge. How we escaped such a disaster we could not tell; we were more than satisfied that we made the perilous portages safely.

At noon we left the mountains and descended into the pleasant valley which surrounded Coeur d'Alene lake, where a halt was called for refreshment. The lake is a beautiful sheet of water, buried up among the lofty, everlasting hills of the interior, surrounded by valleys and pine forests. Geographically the lake lies north and south, the road passing at the northern extremity. It is very irregular in shape, but attractive in all ways, its chief water supply being the Coeur d'Alene River.

The roads for the afternoon were all that could be desired, smooth and almost level, following the course of the Spokane River, and the outlet of the Coeur d'Alene lake; our course was along the north bank. Near the place where the river commences, by the lake shore, was an Indian burial ground, a well-selected, pleasant and retired spot. It seemed to have been a popular place for the defunct Indians to tarry while on the way to the "happy hunting ground," as numerous mounds indicated, marked by headboards and the sign of the faith in which they were supposed to have died, however they may have lived. Over many of the graves—"tyees," big Indians, perhaps—little log cabins had been erected, all surmounted by a cross, typical of the faith they professed. Cabalistic symbols on the crosses and

over the doorways to the enclosures meant something to the Indian no doubt, but were Greek to us. Whether these "good Indians" had fully exchanged their superstitious ideas about the spirit land of their ancestors for a belief in the Catholic religion they had been theoretically taught was a sealed book to us.

Toward evening, when it was deemed proper to stop, having made an unusual drive, we camped in the open, on the plains of the Spokane, a long distance from the river, where wood and water were scarce and feed was poor and parched. We were favored at the close of the day with a splendid sunset view, something denied us for many long days.

Several miners visited at our Monday camp on the shore of Coeur d'Alene lake, and they all possessed pouches containing good showings of gold dust. They reported that the mines in that vicinity were paying fair wages and that some of the diggings and sluices were not more than two miles from where we were. Time and our point of destination did not permit of an investigation of this report. Prospectors were numerous in this whole region, and were hurrying around singly or in pairs in every direction where they thought that gold could be found. It was not uncommon to see a lone miner tramping along through these mountain solitudes leading or driving a donkey packed with his worldly effects.

The entire system of mountains we had traversed since entering the forest region at Deer Lodge was marked with trails leading in all directions, some of them well worn and ancient, made

by Indians in their wanderings, and afterwards followed by mounted explorers and packers, but no wagon ever penetrated these wildernesses until a barely passable way had been cut, burned and blasted out by infinite labor and an enormous outlay of money, within the previous five years.

Several Spokane Indians visited our camp in the evening, all seeming very friendly, putting every one at ease. They soon found out that ours was not a trading expedition, and had nothing to "swap" or sell. They would have been glad to have secured some of the "Boston man's" bacon, a luxury to them, but our supply was getting very close to the end; was too precious to let go. These Indians were generally fair looking, not at all sinister, tho they delighted in daubing their faces with a dirty mineral paint. We met several Indian families, who were evidently returning home from a season at some summer watering place. A few of these nomads camped near us at night, but they were very quiet and no annoyance to their neighbors.

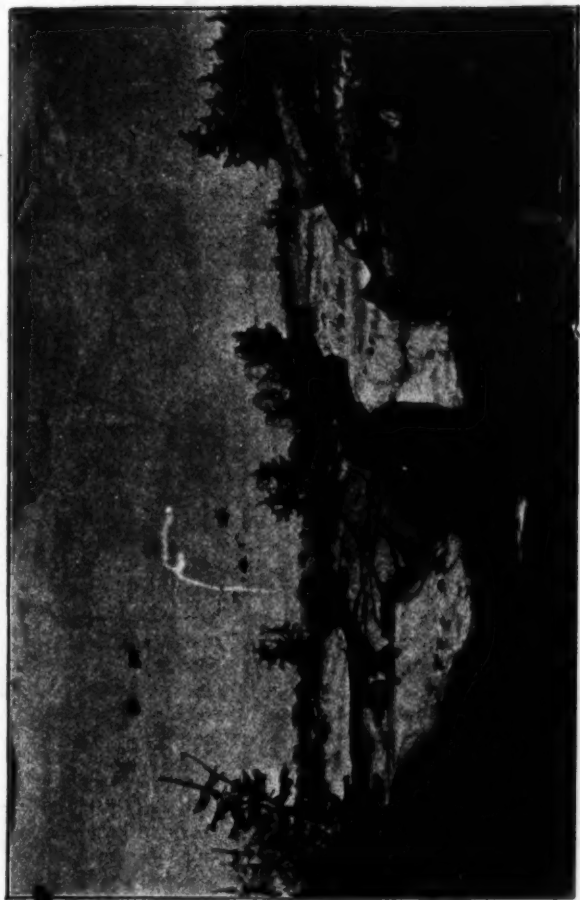
Camp 99, September 23.—The barren condition of the whole locality where camp was located last night prompted a very early start this morning, and the sun rose without a cloud to cast a shadow or to intercept its bright and cheerful rays. The mountains were far enough away to give a pleasing aspect to the landscape, and indicated that for a day or two at least we would not be under the necessity of scaling a towering peak or a spur; that thought afforded relief to our travel worn company.

It was noted with regret by all that the four handsome horses belonging to the young men who were traveling with and were a part of our caravan were visibly failing in strength; their ambition seemed to be gone, were indifferent and feeble, and they moved along as though it was a painful task to push one foot ahead of the other. They were noble animals, about four years old, kind and willing, and our own little party took as much pride in them as did their owners.

The pet and especial admiration of the whole train was "old Bunker," a dark bay, the largest of the four. Every day since leaving the black forest, as we termed it, it seemed as though his frame showed clearer through his skin, revealing his skeleton, until it seemed his bones would wear through. He was frequently given a little piece of bread from our stores, which were now getting scant; there was an appealing thankfulness in his eyes, and the old fellow looked his gratitude, if ever a horse did. Grain could not be had and forage had been scarce for a good many days.

The superiority of mules over horses for such long continued journeying had been established; our mules were in good condition, other than needing a few days' rest. They could live and thrive where horses would starve. We traveled slower by three or four miles a day in order to keep the company together and have the advantage of aggregate strength.

The prairie we drove out into this morning was divided by a belt of pine woods for some distance, and then the open valley extended along on both sides of the river—the Spokane—as far as the eye



SPOKANE FALLS IN 1862.



could reach. The river was about one hundred yards wide; the water was clear and flowed smoothly along, but was too deep for fording.

The roads were incomparable, and we pushed along, making good time until noon, when we halted for rest at what was supposed to be a regular ford, as many wheel tracks led into the water. The ford was a startling delusion and came near making wreckage of all the train. The water was about three and one-half feet deep, with a swift current, and the bed of the stream was full of huge boulders, an exceedingly unsafe, rough place to risk teams and wagons. The latter were thrown around with terrible force until it seemed that everything would be wrecked and lost beyond recovery.

Two wagons, by good management, were gotten safely over, out of about twenty wagons, which made up the caravan at this time. The rest of the company concluded not to make the venture, but to go further down the river either to obtain a better fording place or a ferry, if either was to be had. Two miles below an excellent ford was found where the river became wider and shallower, the bed being gravelly all the way. That first Spokane crossing will be long remembered; but of course we had no occasion to repeat an experience at any time in the same locality.

Camp was located on the river bank near a tremendous cataract or falls, where the water rushed past in an irresistible torrent with a roar and a force that made the rocky walls tremble; our tent was staked down beneath the branches of a widespreading pine tree. The scenery around

was weird and not at all displeasing. The tremendous music of the cataract charmed the camp into sound and needed slumber.

There were two divisions to the falls and rapids of about a quarter of a mile in extent; the main falls were, perhaps, twenty feet in height, the other about twelve; the whole was a swift cataract, where the water descends more than one hundred feet in a fourth of a mile; a mighty power, of no use to man.

Thus we camped at Spokane Falls in September, 1862, at a time when it was not known that a white man lived or had located within a hundred miles or more of the place, or even wanted to even under compulsion. Prospectors, packers and traders went past the falls, in traveling over the country, but there was nothing to induce any one to remain around the falls longer than for a one-night camp. The trail to Colville and Okanogan crossed the river some distance below the falls and, perhaps, of those who used that trail not one in a hundred ever heard of this magnificent waterfall, or would have turned aside to see it if they had known of its existence. A few years later and Spokane became a prominent railroad centre, a handsome and flourishing city; the natural pivot of an inland empire; but its future possibilities cut no figure in our dreams at the time of which I write. He would have been an enthusiast indeed who could have dreamed out the marvelous change in a few short years, and the stupendous advance the country was to make within two decades.

The Spokane of then and now is well shown



SPOKANE FALLS IN 1902-3.



by the illustrations given elsewhere, which reveal far better than words can paint the wonderful progress in the "course of empire," which followed so closely the period when the journey recounted in this memoir was made. The Spokane of now is a magic city, a wonderful evidence and result of push, energy and intelligent effort in a new country. It was eighteen years after our visit before the first movement began which made the Spokane of to-day.

Camp 100, September 24.—Again the day began pleasant and bright, and by 7 o'clock we were moving. Soon after starting the whole train was obliged to go a long distance out of a direct course to avoid an extensive "stone meadow;" we did not escape all the stones even by this move; and "Jordan was a hard road to travel," of a certainty. This immense expanse, so thickly covered with great boulders, was the playground of some kind of a vagrant freak of nature when this part of the world was the scene of tremendous activity, during its formative period. There did not seem to be mountains near enough for them to have rolled down from, unless in time of great flood; the conclusion was that the boulders, all of them large, many of them broken and rough, had been thrown here by some great volcanic upheaval. The section was distinctly volcanic, as shown on every hand.

After passing this stone-covered region the trail led back to the river again, which we followed to the ferry, reaching it about 10 o'clock. Here we intercepted the trail from Colville to Walla Walla,

where we turned southward, passing over a rolling prairie country, a series of pine openings, about equally divided between prairie and timber. The season was so far advanced that grass was withered and almost worthless, except in isolated spots where bunch grass could be found, and then by accident. Numerous bands of animals belonging to pack trains and freighting outfits had browsed the country almost bare.

To the southeast the Blue Mountain range skirts the horizon and afforded a relief to the blank appearance of the landscape. We had no means of estimating the great distance from point to point as the panorama unfolded before us, but peaks and ranges of mountains were at so great a distance that they seemed like hills rising from the floor of a prairie; yet there were some big mountains among them.

Since descending along the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains into the Yellowstone valley our course had been N. N. W., and we had traversed over a trail involving eight degrees of longitude to the point where we now turned south, the slope leading down to the Grand Coulee of the Columbia. The great highway also in its meanderings from the day we crossed South Pass had covered about five and one-half degrees of latitude, from the forty-first parallel to forty-seven and a half, a little more than one degree south from the northern boundary of the United States, embracing the greater part of the vast bed of mountain chains within the territory of the United States.

A passenger on the Northern Pacific Railroad

can take a palatial coach at Missoula, where we camped one night at the mouth of Hell Gate, and be whirled through the gorges, along the rivers and through the mountains, where we found so many obstacles and dangers, thence to Spokane, in a less number of hours than it took our party days. The transition is something to excite wonder and could not have been imagined in 1862.

Just before sunset we descended a long hill by an easy grade, and camped at its base near a stream, fringed on either side by a thick growth of cottonwood timber and underbrush, but scant in forage. By a bright camp fire the log of the day was written, from which these reflections emanate.

Our tent and camp life to-night had rounded out the full century mark and had occupied one hundred and thirty-two days; much was crowded into that period; some of those days represented pitiful heart-breaking scenes, as well as continued exciting and perilous experiences. We looked back that night in amazement at what we had undertaken and what had been overcome without disaster or accident of any kind to our train and the members of our company; but no vision of a wonderful future appeared to claim attention for even one brief moment. The mind and brain were too weary to conjure up the wonderful developments which time was destined to bring forth, in cultivating, subduing and beautifying the waste places throughout this region then given over to utter sterility, and make the desert blossom like the rose.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

An Early Start—A Beautiful Sunrise—Bleak and Barren Country—Sage the Absinthe of the Voyageurs—Directing to a Camp Ground—A Friend to His Kind—Volcanic Region—Companion Missing—Overtaken by Some Who Had Left Us—Chilling Wind and Rain—A Satanic Abode—The Lost is Found—A Large Pack Train—A Magnificent View, with Qualifications—A Visit from Nez Percés Indians—Finely Developed Indians—Head Chief Lawyer—Sub-Chief Joseph—Indians Badly Treated—Dishonest Indian Agents—Camp in the Wild Oats—Almost a Catastrophe—A Sea of Flame—Narrow Escape.

CAMP 101, September 25.—It was "boots and saddles" this morning at an early hour, when most of us would have preferred to rest in quietness, had there been any choice permitted. A beautiful morning it was, too. The sun rose in splendor, lighting up the peaks and ridges of the Blue Mountains in the distance with a soft and radiant glow, bringing out in relief every attraction in nature, animating every living creature; the air was pure and bracing and everything outward gave assurance that a good drive could be made. The road, going south now, we faced the sun until we reached the point where the trail and the Columbia river came together.

The trail was laid through a country to-day that was open and rolling, but bleak and barren; an arid plain would be a feeble mode of expression. It was destitute alike of water and feed, or anything else that would contribute to make life pleasant or even bearable. For the entire day we passed over a continuous rocky region, and the caravan jolted and rattled along with incessant noise. This locality is the rim of the volcanic district on the Pacific side of the Rocky Mountains, and has the same characteristics everywhere as shown in such serious forms on the eastern border. When the upheaval occurred which turned the Columbia River out of its natural channel and broke down a new one through the solid granite for hundreds of miles around the Great Bend, the warring elements left a seal of disfavor on a vast area, which remained unbroken through all succeeding ages, and will always exist as an everlasting evidence of an elemental fury in ages past.

We encountered the artimesia again to-day; it had been so long since we had parted company with the shrub that it had been quite forgotten. It was small and stunted and looked as though it was trying to maintain an uncertain existence as a protest against an irrevocable edict of nature against anything whatever growing in a region so accursed as this and blistering with the heated potash which was vomited from the depths of earth, searing and destroying everything which might show an effort at vitality.

Sage is a native of and thrives best on parched, sandy soil that will not produce anything else un-

less it is covered with thorns and is a torture to the flesh; but it was a puzzle how even sage could struggle along here when a rain storm would produce a stream of alkali sufficient to roast the life out of anything short of an iron bar. The old voyageurs used to brew absinthe from the wild sage; they thus secured the extract of wormwood desired, a cordial, or flavored, tonic, which was made to serve as an acceptable substitute for the more refined sort distilled by more complete means.

We traveled long and steadily that day and looked anxiously for a stopping place—any locality suggesting the possibility of a camp which might offer a reasonable approach to convenience, disregarding comfort, but for reasons, as stated, the search was fruitless. When night began to draw near a notice was discovered which had been secured to a branch of a sage bush by the roadside, directing all travelers to turn off from the main trail and drive some distance to the right, where good camping could be found. This cheering news seemed to penetrate the comprehension even of the mules and galvanized new life into the tired beasts, and that drive was quickly made. We found a fine spring of pure water in a clump of willow bushes and abundance of feed of a quality much superior to what we had been favored with for days; it was a God-send to weary pilgrims in that Satanic region, put there to redeem some of its forbidding features. Whoever put that notice up was a friend to his kind, and assuredly he received our most heartfelt benedictions.

Made camp at a late hour and hurried through all necessary arrangements for supper and rest; it was soon discovered that one of the company was missing; such camp fires as could be made and the frequent shooting of guns did not bring in the absent one. Many had to walk nearly all the time, as the animals of the entire train were getting too weak to drag anything not absolutely required to sustain life; it was concluded that this man while walking along had become bewildered among the numerous trails which traversed the country and so became separated from the company.

The weather had been cold all day, with a stiff westerly wind, and in the evening it turned to rain. It was a night of chilling discomfort.

We were overtaken during the day by several of the party who had separated from us on Beaver Creek and had gone into the Beaver Head mines. These parties had traversed some defile from the head of Salmon River and had gotten into this region some way, they hardly knew how. They brought discouraging reports of the mining enterprises there, having found nothing worth staying for, though some miners were doing well. They also brought reports of additional Indian trouble, that a band of Blackfeet had made a descent into the Deer Lodge and run off much of the stock from there and had committed other serious depredations. This party had hurried out of the valley, and only knew of this Indian raid by hearsay. We afterwards found the stories to be only partially true.

Other plunderers were noticed through this re-

gion—the road from Spokane to Walla Walla—in numerous crows, magpies and ravens—marplots of the feathered tribe—the dead and decaying cattle offering them a rare banquet the whole season. These were about the only birds in such a region, and they will go anywhere and live in any region where their favorite diet of carrion is to be obtained.

September 26.—Remained in camp for the day to rest and recruit the animals after the exceedingly trying drive of yesterday, as also to institute search for our lost associate. Soon after daylight three scouts started out to endeavor to find the missing man. The searching party had not been out half an hour when the lost one appeared in camp somewhat used up from exposure and hunger, but otherwise all right. He had taken one of the numerous-pack trails which led in every direction, thinking to intercept the wagon road at a point where he could meet the train. The road proved to be so much longer than the pack trail, that when camp was made he was about ten miles in advance. He had slept by the roadside under such protection as a bunch of sage afforded and had been thoroughly drenched by the cold, penetrating rain; about noon the scouts returned from their man hunt, not particularly pleased with their tramp, but satisfied when no one was lost.

It was an easy matter to get bewildered in such a boundless waste, especially where the surface of the ground was rolling enough to conceal a



wagon train, and in a sea of sage brush sufficient to hide a person on foot.

The camp ground was favorable to a lengthy stay, but a cold north wind drove everything to shelter; there was nothing to break the force of the wind for miles, and we received the full benefit of the biting arctic blast. In the afternoon we had rain and snow. A number of mining prospectors and packers passed our camp ground during the day on their way north to the mines and trading posts. One large train, containing about fifty animals, all heavily packed, came up and halted long enough to permit the pack mules to drink and then be whirled away with demoniac yells and a cloud of dust. Each mule in the train was struggling along under fully three hundred pounds weight, making about fifteen thousand pounds of freight. These animals would sometimes be forced fifty miles a day under that load.

Preparations for supper that evening were an entertaining exercise; it interested the whole party. The decrease of a keen appetite, encouraged by hard labor and climatic conditions not wonderfully delightful, prompted all to lend assistance, and carrying water from the spring, chopping sagebrush—a continuous performance to keep a fire going where the branches were small—baking, boiling, frying, all proceeding over a gypsy fire, gave out something of a picnic appearance, and every one ostentatiously proclaimed it delightful!

Camp 102, September 27.—The nature of the country over which the trail passed to-day dif-

ferred essentially in its principal features from what had previously been encountered. The results of volcanic eruption or other seismic action were shown in profusion, and strange formations were noticeable. A great number of mounds of symmetrical proportions, composed of small-sized rocks, were scattered over the entire surface of an immense area, no soil or sand being mingled with them. The rocks were of basalt, perforated like a sponge, but as heavy and as hard as iron slag. The trail twisted and cork-screwed around among these stony mounds in a bewildering sort of a way, until one hardly knew whether the course was forward or the cavalcade was going back.

A flame of fearful intensity from unseen subterranean furnaces had swept over this great region and fused these rocks into almost a sea of molten glass. It passed human ken to measure, in imagination, the fierce blast that at some time in a formative period had been forced over that volcanic region, fusing the rocks into lava and throwing boulders into incomprehensible confusion, the shock prostrating mountains of granite, the upheaval changing the course of mighty rivers. The whole country for hundreds of square miles had been recently burned over by surface fires, this being easily comprehended, leaving everything black and desolate from the destruction which ensued.

About noon we crossed a small creek which was deep down among ledges of irregular and fantastic shaped rocks; a crooked and exceeding narrow road led down to the bed of the creek

and out on the opposite side. Halted at this point for noon refreshment, remaining about two hours and a half.

The view from this location was expansive, and its extent under some conditions and circumstances would have been truly magnificent. Some distant peaks of the pine clad Blue Mountains gave a little relief to the eastern portion of the picture, but the vast distances elsewhere were brown and burned, showing only repellant features; one naturally feels as though he were intruding in his satanic majesty's domain, and had entered the vestibule to regions below. The rolling, irregular hills were ragged and broken, their granite faces being torn asunder and made impassable for man or beast by the elements when at white heat.

The weather all day was cold, a heavy wind blowing constantly, which increased almost to a gale at sunset. The road was long and circuitous, and very rough; a long way around to gain a short distance across. Toward evening we passed Lake Sil-kat-kwa, a beautiful sheet of water, but inaccessible on account of its perpendicular, rocky banks; the road was laid close to the edge of the bank, affording a fine view of the pretty little iron bound lake. So far as we could observe, it had no shore, or beach, the perpendicular banks extending down to the water's edge.

The road descended into a valley below the lake to a spring of excellent water, where camp was made; wood was the minus quantity; grass was poor and each animal had a struggle for all he obtained that night.

. . . At the noon halt we received a visit from a company of Indians, numbering about one hundred; had they been a warlike people out for a round-up, it would certainly have gone hard with our little company, but they proved to be a band of Nez Percés, as much on a pleasure excursion as anything, for certainly they could not have been hunting in such an abandoned region where no self-respecting animal would stay over night if he could help it.

The abode of the Nez Percés was more than a hundred miles eastward on a reservation on the east slope of the Blue Mountains. With few exceptions the Nez Percés were a peaceable, aboriginal people, on good terms with the whites. The nation was composed of twenty-four separate tribes, each tribe with a chief and a head chief over all.

They were a fine looking lot of Indians, none of them displeasing in features, but decked out, of course, in true Indian style; they were mounted on large handsome horses, as fine an array of the animal creation as could be found anywhere. Old Lawyer, the head chief of the nation, was with the party and he came forward to introduce himself and assured our company of perfect safety. Lawyer's Indian name was Hal-hal-tlos-sot. For an Indian he was prepossessing, much beyond the average, and was an intelligent, prudent and successful ruler; his influence was strong and his will was law among the tribes, his edicts being always received and obeyed. He understood some English, and could talk a little, but the jar-

gon was much easier for intercourse with the whites.

By inquiry he found out who Judge Hewitt was and his official standing and immediately asked the judge to assist his people in getting a settlement of money due them from the "Great Father" in Washington, and payment on accounts long overdue. He produced from his own and the belts of his associates numberless papers, all calling for the payment of money due from the United States to members of the tribe, for witness fees and other services rendered, aggregating an immense sum, and Lawyer began to think that there was no pretence that they would ever be paid, having been put off so often. The old chief thought the "hayas tyee"—in Chinook, high officer—might help him. The judge promised to render such assistance as he could, and he did, on a subsequent trip to Washington.

It seemed that more than one million dollars were due to Indian tribes in that northwestern country, which dishonest agents and others entrusted with Indian affairs prevented the Indians from ever getting, either by downright theft or other systems of juggling well known to cunning operators in Indian matters.

The uniform fraud and deceit practiced on the Indians, both in money matters and issuing annuity goods, have been the primary cause of more trouble and bloody reprisal than any or all other causes combined. These frauds were a base betrayal of those who in good faith first made the treaties with the Indians and secured their good will toward the white man.

Sub-Chief Joseph, one of the twenty-four, accompanied by several of his tribe, rode in some time after Lawyer and his company had been at our camp, but he took no part in any "wa-wa"—talk—but held aloof and was very morose. He was always the disturbing element in the Nez Percés nation, had nothing in common with the white, and went on the war path, in 1876, causing great injury to settlers, and perpetrated many murders. Lawyer could not restrain him.

When that band of Indians rode away, which they did in a semi-military order, they made a very fine appearance on their handsome horses. Every individual of them was a stalwart in stature, of good face and was armed with a modern rifle and a big hunting knife at his belt.

Two years after this accidental meeting in the mountains the old chief, Lawyer, visited Olympia in the same interest, to interview in person the Superintendent of Indian Affairs; he received scant satisfaction. I was printing a paper in Olympia at the time and Lawyer called several times at my office, out of mere curiosity. He remembered well when the "hyas tyee" visited his "ilihee"—country—and went to the judge's office to see him; he was pleasantly entertained.

Camp 103, Sunday, September 28.—Our road for this day's journey lay down the valley into which we entered last evening, and followed until noon, when we crossed a creek, the outlet of the deeply sunken lake with the Indian name; here we halted for the midday rest, in the midst of a field of tall dry grass and wild oats, with nothing but



MOUTH OF PALOUSE RIVER AT SNAKE RIVER.



the limited shade offered by the covered wagons to shut out the sun's rays.

The roads were in many respects only a repetition of those of Saturday. In the afternoon there was more variety to the trail, but none the less we had a full limit of rough and rocky way. We passed through some little arable valleys where nature seemed desirous of relaxing the cruel, barren rule, condemning this region to utter desolation, and over ledges of sharp and broken rocks and huge piles of boulders of all shapes and sizes, trying alike to mule strength and endurance, not to speak of suppressed tempers. We passed a number of places where there was good feed and water, but did not stop until we had reached and forded the Peluse River near the point where it empties into the Snake; then on the bank of the former river we fixed camp for the night. Dry driftwood gathered along the river served to give all the fire needed for cooking and for warming the night watch.

A little affair occurred at noon, which by rare good fortune did not result disastrously, and so put an end to our further journeying by wagon. One of the party of young men traveling with us, in his haste to clear their dinner things away and pack up, turned the stove over to empty out the coals. Thoughtlessly this was done in the dry grass and tall wild grain; a brisk breeze was blowing at the time which had just sprung up, and in an instant the coals were fanned into a blaze, and in less time than it took to make written notes of it, a vast amphitheatre of fire encircled our whole train.

There was no avoiding this sweeping conflagration, nor could anything be done to check it. How the ladies escaped the flaming furnace with not more than singed faces, clothed as they were in cotton garments, and how the cotton wagon covers escaped taking fire, were some of the things left unexplained, as only a narrow wagon track divided the sea of flame; but so it was; fortunately nothing was seriously injured; a set of harness was blistered somewhat and a few dishes—Platte Valley silver—were ruined. The mules were driven to the windward and escaped a singeing. The young man whose heedlessness caused the fire that came so near an overwhelming tragedy was soundly lectured by his associates. All's well that ends well. As we drove off, billows of flame running with the wind were evidence enough that little dry forage would be left on that ridge.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

An Anxious Party—Wretched Roads—An Alkali Dust Storm—Crossing the Peluse River—A Rocky Region—Some Pretty Valleys—Large Freighting Trains—Visiting the Peluse Falls—Provisions Getting Low—Crossing the Peluse River—Ferrying Snake River Again—Description of Peluse Falls—October Frost—Seasonable Weather—Cold Rains—Snow Storm in the Mountains—Sand Storm—Camp on Dry Creek—Old Bunker Left to Die—Mud Creek—Arrive at Walla Walla—Missionaries and Missions.

CAMP 104, September 29.—Anxiety to end this wearisome long-drawn-out journey was the accelerating motive that prompted an early breakfast and a good start on the road; the whole party had but one wish, to get through to the end. The trail followed the river, much of the time near its bank and crossed it five times by fords. The road was so wretchedly bad that we were unable to make our average daily drive. The sky was deeply overcast in the morning, and the thick, murky clouds hovering close to the earth betokened an approaching storm; it came in due time, but was not of the character anticipated. The prevailing wind—evidently a hold-over from the day previous—for a time came in fitful gusts, sweeping over the ground with a centrifugal motion, gathering up and filling the air with blind-

ing, choking clouds of dust and sand. Every accumulating gust of wind, which whistled like a western cyclone, seemed to be stronger than the preceding one, and to carry more dust, until it was well nigh impossible to see a rod ahead.

The whole surface of the ground was so strongly impregnated with alkali that it operated like quick lime on one's eyes, and its effects were plainly apparent in the inflamed and bloodshot eyes of all the company. The effects of the intensity of this sand storm lingered for several weeks with some of the party, causing much distress and days of partial blindness. Every mule and horse had his eyes and nose washed with warm water that evening; and every animal appreciated the process.

The hills all around these small valleys seemed to have lost some of their ragged appearance, and began to get smaller and the country to become more open and rolling; but everything was barren of timber. As night approached we searched for an inviting spot on which to pitch our tent with convenient surroundings. Where we did finally stop was at a place not wholly to our liking, but the best to be found; camp was located on the edge of the Peluse River, close to a perpendicular wall of rock which formed its bank. Up this place it was difficult to convey water necessary for camp purposes, but it had to be done. The fuel again was the dry driftwood—cedar and pine—which could be garnered among the rocks at the water's edge. After crossing the Spokane River we passed over some sections of good agricultural land, valleys and tablelands,

which were just as they had always been, in a natural state; but they were limited in area and widely separated. They were carpeted with a good growth of grass, with some wild grain in places; they were not always well watered and were uniformly barren of timber. One mesa, covered with a sparse growth of clear pine trees, afforded a pleasant relief from utter desolation; through this grove the wagons rolled easily over the soft bed of spines which had fallen from the trees. In the same distance there was stone enough along the trail to have built a new Great Wall of China, or to have rebuilt the walls of Babylon, and several other cities, and enclosed, besides, as much of the outside country as the kings or other satraps might have wished, with walls as broad and as high as the Babylonian engineers could devise; and there would be stones left.

Considerable activity on the road was everywhere manifested to-day, the evidence being shown in the increased number of large freight-ing wagons and pack trains moving in various directions, loaded with goods and en route to the mines. From an elevated point a hundred or more heavily loaded wagons were seen to be moving northward, while a considerable number of emigrant wagons, like our own, were going south to our destination; besides these many pack animals loaded with all they could carry were on the move.

An account of stock was taken this evening, and it was found that the store of provisions was getting low, so much so that it was concluded that

this division of the journey must be covered soon or the company would have to be put on short rations; the young men accompanying us were entirely out of provisions, excepting a few dried peas, obtained at the Coeur d'Alène mission, and a limited amount of sugar; they had been freely served from our stores for three days. Dried peas are not much more nourishing than a diet of pine chips. After leaving the mission there was no opportunity to obtain anything.

Camp 105, September 30.—We commenced to move at an early hour this morning, and for the first three hours followed the course of the Peluse River, crossing it three times, by fording. The last ford was at the point where the En-cha-rae-ne River enters the Peluse. These crossings were not troublesome, as the bed of the river was comparatively smooth, the water being about two and one-half feet deep. From the last crossing the road lay through a valley which widened out somewhat as we advanced, and for fifteen miles to the place where the Peluse empties into the Lewis fork of the Snake we drove through a region that was the sum total of barrenness, with unspeakably wretched roads. The roadmaster of this district had evidently failed to cause the accumulated rocks to be thrown out of the highway; the passage of vehicles over the road might have been heard a long distance as they rattled along, hitting every one of the stony obstructions, and then passing through spots of deep sand.

This delectable region stood in great need of many things to make it attractive; a few willow

bushes along the river, apparently stunted by an edict of nature at the beginning of their existence, was all the evidence of tree life or vegetation we found. A short distance from the last crossing the Peluse enters a deep cañon, through which it courses for several miles among isolated basalt buttes, of volcanic origin, to its junction with the Snake, where a ferry had been established.

We halted at noon at the foot of a hill, on the lee side, as a protection against a cold wind; the grazing was indifferent, but the animals managed, in an hour, to do themselves reasonable justice.

A short time before night we reached the Snake River, over which our party was ferried, it being long after dark before the last wagon was transported to the south side. The ferry was a crazy concern, and the current of the river strong. Every one connected with an emigrant train was expected and required to assist in navigating the ferry boat, besides compensating the ferryman roundly for the privilege of transit. This was our second crossing of the Snake River after a long and circuitous journey of forty-five days, and none of our party expressed any more delight over the fact than they did at the first crossing. I thought of the fish I had taken out of the river before, but there was no opportunity to try for the finny tribe this time; salmon were said to be numerous.

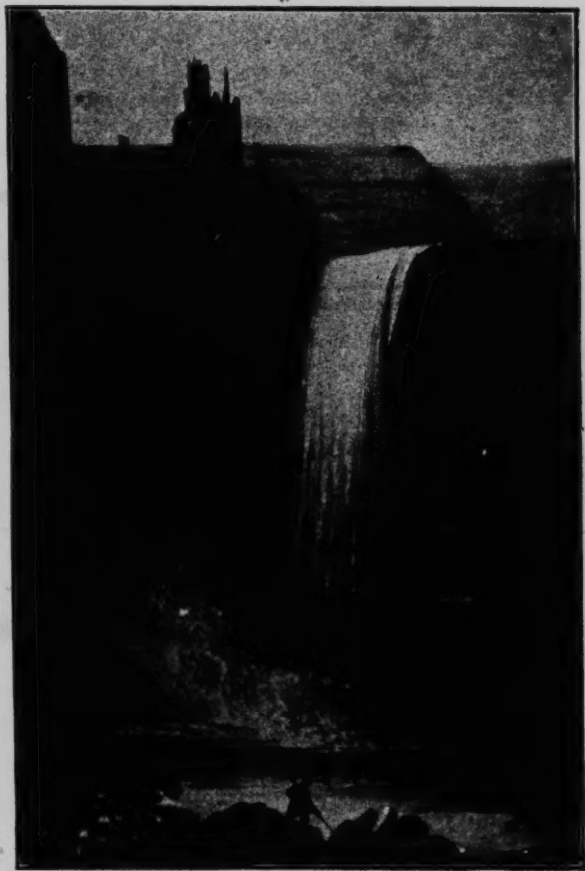
A few white men and about a dozen Indians were hanging around the ferry landing, but none of them appeared to be very clean or very ambi-

tious. A trading post had been established on the south bank of the river, and the stock of merchandise seemed to be about equally divided between staple provisions and liquors, the balance, if anything, being on the liquor side. As flour was getting low in our stock, an additional supply to carry us over a few days was obtained here, costing twelve dollars per hundred pounds.

There was no time to select a camp ground, good or bad, so we stopped immediately after getting over the ferry, in the deep sand on the river bank; an Indian good naturedly piloted us a little distance off the road to a spot where fair grazing could be had; a handful of fine cut tobacco sent that Indian on his way in a happy frame of mind.

A little party was made up in the morning from the various emigrant outfits with us, to visit the falls of the Peluse, a few miles off the road to the east. I was not of the number on this special expedition, as I was sympathizing with Job, in a limited way, and not being in very good condition for any extra walking took little interest in the proposed trip. The excursionists started out, however, and on their return overtook the train before night by taking a cut-off trail, and reported themselves as highly pleased with their hard day's tramp, and delighted with the view of the falls they obtained.

Gov. Stevens, in the narrative of his railway survey from St. Paul to Puget Sound in 1853-5, gives a good description of the falls; the party that visited them to-day added the information that the trail to the falls was very bad, barely passable with infinite trouble, and had they not



PALOUSE FALLS.

been near their journey's end they would certainly have turned back without accomplishing their mission. The description is as follows :

"The Peluse river flows over three steppes, each of which is estimated to have an ascent of a thousand feet. The falls descend from the middle of the lower of these steppes. There is no timber along the course of this stream, and but few willow or other bushes; yet the soil is fertile, and the grass nutritious and abundant even in winter. The fall of water, which is about thirty feet wide, cannot be seen from any distant point; for flowing above in jagged pinnacles it suddenly descends some one hundred and twenty-five feet into a narrow basin, and thence flows rapidly away through a deep cañon from a point from which the annexed view was sketched. The distance from the falls to Snake River is about nine miles. The valley widens considerably for about half a mile from the mouth of the Peluse. The home of the Peluse Indians is near this junction, where they devote much of their time to salmon fishing. The salmon ascend to the falls; but these Indians have a legend which tells of the wickedness of the Indians higher up the country, and how the Great Spirit, in His displeasure, placed the falls as a barrier to the further ascent of the salmon."

The camp to-night, Number 105, closes another month of our travels among the mountains, valleys and deserts of the continent, including many days of weary toil and exertion.

Camp 106, October 1.—The first of the month opened clear with a bracing atmosphere befitting the month and day. The late hour when camp was made last night and the difficulty of getting feeding ground for the animals, necessarily made

the time late before our train took up its line of march to the place where this camp was located, by a feeble spring, twenty-two miles from the river. By ten o'clock the sky became overcast with murky clouds and occasional light intermittent showers of rain fell; but soon after a stiff breeze cleared the clouds away and then gathered up the sand furiously, filling the air to an unpleasant degree. These disadvantages did not deter us from steadily continuing on our way, ascending and descending hills, crossing steep ridges, and over hollows and plains, with a fixed determination to end this exacting journey.

Anon we would find an oasis where sand did not abound to such a degree and where we could afford time to stop a few moments to let the animals "blow," that the sand might be wiped from faces, noses and ears, and some removed from the lungs, so a good, long, filling breath could be had with enjoyment.

Late at night the spring was reached, and to our deep chagrin the water was only in limited quantity and very bad in quality; there was not the slightest apology for grass and no wood whatever. In this wretched place we had to stay, and we made the best of an attempt to rest, with our hungry and exhausted animals pawing the sand and calling for something to eat.

Here it was determined upon by the gentlemen who had so long been our traveling companions, after much reflection, that it would be impossible to get Old Bunker, the splendid old horse before mentioned, any further, as he appeared to be completely broken down; he was to be left to take

care of himself, until some one with a tender heart might pick him up, should he gain strength enough to walk further.

Camp 107, October 2.—Struck camp and started on our way, as by previous arrangement, before sunrise. A little brackish water had filtered into the pool that somebody in irony had denominated a spring, so the mules had a slight allowance each. The road was good enough to cause astonishment and with unwonted lightness of step the animals rolled the wagons rapidly down to the Touchet River, and there we halted for breakfast; the animals did not fare so well, as they had to be taken a long distance to the hills to get their meal of dry but nutritious grass, and then back again to camp and to water.

The river was narrow and shallow, but flowed through a very fertile valley, the attractions of which had been sufficient to induce many hardy pioneers to select homesteads within its borders and farm houses were dotted here and there along the river banks; the field enclosures showed that wherever the soil was cultivated the yield was substantial. Fruit trees of various kinds were growing in some places and looked well. The agricultural extent of the valley is limited, being confined to a narrow strip on each side of the river, but it was all productive, producing grain to perfection and vegetables of fabulous size. Cottonwood trees were scattered along the banks of the river, but sparse, not enough to over-supply the demand.

In the afternoon we drove twelve miles to Dry

Creek and camped, six miles from Walla Walla; the weather was cold and dismal during the entire day; in the evening a snow storm passed over and found lodgment in the Blue Mountains to the east, in plain sight. The atmosphere, as a result of this early storm, needed warming around our camp to insure comfort, and we succeeded with what limited amount of firewood we could collect, in modifying but a small part of it. Two large pack trains bivouacked in company with us at night; and we were still in Washington Territory.

Camp 108, October 3.—From last camping place we moved this morning about four miles to Mud Creek—and it certainly fully justified that name—and halted, it being as near to the city of Walla Walla as we could get and have feed for the stock. The weather during the forenoon could not have been finer if made to order; the snow storm of yesterday had cleared the air, and the sun came out warm and pleasant. In the afternoon, however, a south wind brought with it a cold rain; wood being unobtainable, we had no fire, and the day dragged out in the most disagreeable manner conceivable.

Judge Hewitt and family had been invited to share the hospitality of the home of Hon. John McGilvra, U. S. Prosecuting Attorney for the Territory, who, in pursuance of his official duties, had located in Walla Walla; they accepted the kind invitation and for the first time in about five months resided for a few days under a roof, an agreeable change from camp life in tent or wagon.

The remaining members of the company afterwards drove in and camped on the border of the city, where feed and wood could be obtained at comparatively moderate cost.

As we passed down the valley leading to the settlements and Walla Walla City Judge Hewitt pointed out the location, about nine miles from the city, where Rev. Dr. Marcus Whitman and his devoted wife, the adventurous missionaries, founded a mission in 1836-7 and commenced their work of disseminating the Gospel of Peace among the Indians, the doctor ministering to them as a physician in sickness as well. The doctor and his good wife were both cruelly murdered by a treacherous savage of the Cayuse tribe in 1847. The story of the experience of Dr. Whitman and his wife, as also his entire household, during their labors among the Indians, was one of self-denial, and was pathetic in every way; they labored unselfishly and successfully for the good of the Indians and had won the confidence of all the tribes they came in contact with. Their safety seemed assured, but it is believed that adverse influences which were opposed to the introduction of settlers who would be sure to follow the missionaries into and Americanize the country, influenced the more blood-thirsty savages to murder them and all connected with the mission. The doctor had just returned from the burial of an Indian who had died of a prevailing disease, to whom he had administered religious consolation, as well as medical aid.

Dr. Whitman made a horseback journey across the continent in the dead of winter in 1844, arriving in Washington City just in time to prevent

the entire country north of the Columbia River being traded off to Great Britain for the paltry right of fishing for cod and mackerel off the Newfoundland banks for ninety-nine years. For that frightful exposure and service seventy-five million Americans owe Dr. Whitman a debt of gratitude; as in other debts of that character the obligation may never be discharged.

We did not pass near any of the missions established among the Indians in the interior, by the various religious denominations, excepting the Catholic mission at Coeur d'Alene. Incidentally we heard disconnected reports regarding them; the missions seemed to be widely separated and not as prosperous generally as their promoters might wish, tho all doing much substantial good. The isolated, forlorn and perilous life passed by devoted missionaries for more than a third of a century, among Indians who had little desire to forsake a natural inclination to roam and hunt for the scalps and shed the blood of rivals and enemies, since the time when Indians first existed, is worthy of all the praise which friends can bestow ever and history perpetuate.

There can be no question that the influence of these zealous people had a wonderful and permanent effect on the Indian nature—but scores of them yielded up their lives in their devotion to the cause of the Master—and was one of the prime elements in preventing the continuation of bloody massacres such as characterized the days of the Revolutionary War. The influence of the Hudson Bay Fur Company was undoubtedly another powerful factor in restraining Indian vio-

lence; but the mode of procedure of the two processes was very dissimilar, the missionaries holding up the character and example of the Prince of Peace, the other at times exercising the harsh measures suggested by commercial necessities. Both sides did the special work required in its own especial way, and successfully, and the lives of thousands of emigrants were made secure because of it.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Walla Walla City—Eighteen Days from the Coeur d'Alene—Commissary Exhausted—Breakfast in the City—Stiff Prices for Provisions—Letters from Home—A Pleasure Beyond Expression—Walla Walla a Straggling Place—Gambling the Chief Occupation Apparently—A Radiating Centre—Sunday the Best Business Day—U. S. Military Post—The "Emigrant Escort" Not Yet Arrived—Costly Shams—A Diary Entry—Old Bunker Reclaimed—On the Road Again—Walla Walla Valley—Sand Canal to the Columbia River—Our Last Cantonment—An Early Morning Drive—Reach Wallula—The Teams Go to The Dalles Overland—Freaky Act of a Steamboat Captain—Old Fort Wallah-Wallah—A Hudson Bay Company Post—Real Estate Active.

CAMP 108, Continued, October 4.—At last, after months of weary journeying and toil, exhausting alike to traveler and animals, we reached the midway destination we had one and all looked forward to with anxious hope and impatient anticipation. An estimate of distance and time had been made from the best available data at command when in the forest on the Coeur d'Alene, and sixteen days were given in which to cover the same from point to point, making allowances, as thought, for all contingencies of bad roads, accidents and weakened stock. We got through without accident, but by long drives, going on the

trail early and continuing late; the guide stone record of two hundred and forty-six miles was made in eighteen days, less than fourteen miles average a day; and every hour was one of unremitting toil.

Camp was located in the best place to be found, on an open plain, where scores of camps were in view, a mixed assemblage of emigrants just arrived from a long pilgrimage, great freight wagons and pack trains coming from and returning to the mountains and the mines. The numerous camps covered as much ground as a big army, and were scenes of busy activity. Pasturage was scant, and hay and wood had to be purchased at stiff prices; the water from Mud Creek was wet, whatever else might have been said of it.

As our commissary stores were entirely exhausted save a few discs of "hard tack," which had lost all attractions to appetite, tho as nutritious as ever, the first thing this morning was to go into the city for supplies. Goodrich and I made that trip, starting early. A crude breakfast in a crude an ill-conducted restaurant, in a board shanty, surmounted by a sign nearly as big as the building itself, was our first meal outside our camp since camping commenced, May 15, with real chairs and tables, albeit as crude and uncomfortable as everything else about the place.

The menu was not elaborate, but the price paid made up for that, one dollar for each. Any one who would pronounce the decoction served in our cups as coffee certainly could not be accused "of knowing beans."

We obtained a supply of provisions to tide us

over for a few days, the cost running like this: Bread, twenty cents a loaf; potatoes, five cents a pound; fresh meat, forty cents a pound; a small cabbage, twenty-five cents; roasted coffee, sixty-five cents a pound. The conclusion was legitimate that the merchants were not losing money on their goods.

In the course of an aimless ramble to look the town over, I dropped into the post office, and in obedience to an instinct which had been a noticeable characteristic in the human race to visit a post office on its busy day and inquire for mail, tho never expecting any. I fell into line and stepped up to the delivery window and gave my name. I was directed to a bulletin posted on the wall opposite, and I went over and studied the list. There must have been over two thousand names on that list, all alphabetically arranged; I ran down the H's, and, sure enough, there were two for me. They were handed to me, and for the moment I would have bartered everything else on earth for the happiness those little packets gave me, if to obtain them the sacrifice had been required. They were from home, written by my father, and had been directed to Fort Hall, Washington, and were the first I had received from home for five months. As Fort Hall was not a real fort and besides was not a post office or on the overland mail route, they were forwarded to Walla Walla, and had lain in the office for over forty days. I fervently blessed the United States mail service and all connected with it. Those letters were a wonderful elixir to re-

new ambition in life, and are still preserved because of their inestimable value.

The city of Walla Walla, situated about thirty miles from the Columbia River, was a straggling, disorderly looking place, located near the river of the same name, on a small stream called Mill Creek, an affluent of the Walla Walla River. This being the last outfitting frontier point from the Pacific side, made it a place of business importance. The dirty streets were crowded with freighting wagons and teams and pack animals and a considerable army of rough men. One would naturally conclude, to judge from the numerous places where gambling was in progress, day and night, with an orchestra and free lunch as additional attractions in each establishment, that this was the chief occupation, other things and exorbitant prices only ordinary adjuncts; all the games known to the guild were running in full blast unceasingly.

Things in and around the city moved on a fast plane; the church going part of the population found ample room to worship in one small church edifice; but as Sunday was deemed the best business day, it was not expected that many people could spend time in church-going diversion.

About two miles from the city, on a slightly plateau, a United States military station had been established—Fort Walla Walla—and it was then and for many years afterwards an important post for the protection of emigrants, miners and settlers. The location for the post had been selected with excellent judgment, and was nearly in the centre of a great area infested with treacherous,

predatory and blood-thirsty Indians, whose constantly recurring murderous raids on the white people, settlers and emigrants left a bloody trail over every valley and mountain for hundreds of miles around.

Referring again to my diary, made in the evening after a visit to the city of Walla Walla, the following entry appears, and which does not seem to call for revision:

"We learned here from an officer at the fort that the 'Emigrant Escort,' heralded in the spring as a convoy and protection to emigrants crossing the plains, and from whose overshadowing 'protection' we and many other disappointed wayfarers were only too glad to escape so long ago, had not yet arrived at the post, but was expected to reach its destination in about two weeks.

"The story of all emigrants we had met after entering the Green River Basin, where we parted company with many of them, together with this 'safe conduct,' and the statement of emigrants who had preceded us to this place, coincided, that escorts, on the principal they were carried on, were the merest sham; costly playthings benefiting no one but those who conducted them and the contractors who supply their requirements. The intention was good enough, but the results are not up to anticipation. The value and advantage do not nearly equal the cost. If the immense sums thus annually and uselessly expended by the government were applied towards repairing roads, establishing frequent military posts in the more threatened regions, and sinking wells in the

deserts along the way, whereby the hardships of the journey might be lessened, it would be of lasting and incalculable benefit to the emigrants." All this is ancient history now, but nothing of the kind was ever undertaken.

While remaining in camp at this place, the young men who owned the horse, Old Bunker, could not feel satisfied with their turning the old fellow out to die; he had been too faithful an animal on the long journey from the Missouri River; one of their number secured a saddle horse on the fourth day, and went back about fifteen miles, to see how he was. The horse had evidently rested by the spring and had browsed what grass he could find and regained some strength. He manifested his recognition of the party who went after him by a familiar whinny; next day he was brought into camp, where he received an ovation befitting his standing, and placed on good feed. I hope the good old fellow's final end was not urged on and his days shortened by starvation.

Camp 109, October 8.—Bade old traveling companions adieu and were out on the road again this morning at a good hour for the Columbia River. Resting in one camp six days had recruited man and beast, as the forage was plentiful and all other necessities at hand. We had been well advised as to the nature of the road to be traversed to the river, and so fortified ourselves accordingly. For a short distance down the valley to the west the land had been taken up and was occupied, and much of it was under cultivation, and gave evidence of being productive. The greater part of

the valley lies east and north of the city, and was dotted all over with ranch or farm houses and cultivated tracts. The valley was noted as being of great fertility.

We soon passed from arable land, however, into a decidedly pronounced desert region, barren and extremely sandy, where only the sand products, sage and greasewood could find strength and courage to grow. The road lay down along the Walla Walla River, a clear mountain stream of moderate size.

After a drive of seventeen miles through a depth of sand which made the distance seem twice as long, we crossed the Touchet River by a high bridge near its junction with the Walla Walla, and located for the night in a favorable spot. To our astonishment no one appeared at the bridge to demand toll.

The sand dunes in this plain exceeded in many respects the utterly barren characteristics of other sandy wastes we had crossed. For miles in every direction the dunes were of regular shape, smooth, oval mounds drifted up by strong winds, like waves on the ocean. The only things in sight which had the least effect in resisting the wind were patches of sage and greasewood, where they were close enough together to be a protection for each other. The fierce, unrestrained wind had blown the sand from place to place, leaving the shrubs to grace the tops of the mounds, which in places were several feet high. The sand was of a fine, penetrating kind and moved easily with the slightest breeze; and the indications were

that the breezes were not ordinarily very light when once in action.

The wind had scooped the sand out of the roadway several feet in depth, forming a cut through the dunes like a canal with perpendicular banks. Every wagon dragged through this canal ground the sandy bottom deeper and finer and the next wind would whirl much of it out and away. It taxed the animals to their utmost strength to pull our wagons through.

Camp 110, October 9.—Camp to-night was located two miles from the banks of the Columbia in a nice grass-covered range by the Walla Walla. As this was the last spot where forage could be obtained, our lodgment here was one of necessity; from here on to the great river nothing grows, not even the sage, the absence of that shrub being alone positive evidence of absolute desolation.

The road through the sand-cut canal was the counterpart of that of yesterday, excepting being a little hilly. Forded the Walla Walla twice and pitched our tent by its swiftly running waters.

As this was to be the last time our canvas house was to be erected, and our camp life to cease, and we within two miles of the termination of a land journey in this part of the country, camp duty was that night performed with unusual alacrity; the thought that but a few hours more and the wearisome, exacting and anxious journey would be over, struck a responsive chord in every heart, and only the fact that all that little company was tired and needed rest induced sleep

to close weary eyelids that night. There was a sense of relief in the thought and feeling such as one has in nearing home after a long absence.

October 10.—Before sunrise just as faint rays of sunlight appeared over the eastern horizon, the last camp duty had been performed, equipage was stowed, the last cantonment was over and we on the road to the steamboat landing, through sand deeper and more insinuating if possible than for the two days previous. No unnecessary time was lost in making the short drive before us, and we reached Wallula before seven o'clock, but it was with a deep disappointment we found that the boat on which we expected to take passage down the river had, through some sudden freak of the captain, hastened her departure and sailed at daybreak, at just the hour we had abandoned our camp. The steamboat was scheduled to sail at eight o'clock, and passengers were gathering to meet that hour, but for some unexplained reason the captain had arbitrarily put off three hours in advance, leaving fully one hundred anxious passengers, many with traveling outfits, to murmur things in regard to him and a navigation company which would permit such violation of faith. We had heard his warning signal at starting, but supposed it was to rouse intending passengers.

At Walla Walla we had learned that there was no wagon road through the Cascade Mountains—the great range between the Columbia River valley and Puget Sound—not even a trail which a loaded animal could travel; two trails had once been opened, but as they led through forests of enormous timber and over high mountains and



OLD FORT WALLA WALLA.

rugged cañons, they were both now rendered impassable by reason of timber obstructions and land slides. Judge Hewitt knew what snow and rain storms in the Cascade Mountains meant, and so promptly decided to take the teams and the whole camping outfit down the river by boat.

After a consultation it was decided to send the teams by land to The Dalles, there to be sure of finding a freight boat; so two of the party, Goodrich and Mullen, soon started out on that trip, and that separation proved to be final with most of the company. The drive to The Dalles proved to be a hard and rough one, consuming much more time than had been anticipated.

As the river boats on the upper extension of the line were four or five days apart, the inconvenience forced on more than a hundred people by being left stranded may be imagined. Business on the river, owing to the great gold mining enterprises, had suddenly assumed enormous proportions, and opposition boats were plying up and down the river, running against the old established line. After we had been detained one day, a half-finished opposition boat came in from some point above—she was little more than a hull with engines in place—and her captain was prevailed upon to arrange transportation for the company assembled, and all made ready to embark, glad to go forward on anything. The boat would sail at daybreak in the morning, the 12th. The intervening hours were to be passed as best we might.

I put in my time in looking around and making a survey of the little landing place and viewing the magnificent Columbia. It was with a strange

feeling of freedom and surcease of all responsibility; nothing whatever to do or think of in regard to camp matters; I could hardly comprehend the novel feeling, and tramped around in the deep sand to pass time, as the view was exceedingly restricted and the sand dunes were monotonous. A fierce wind, called the Chinook, blows up and down the Columbia whenever in the humor, and these winds sometimes move the sand and gravel around at a furious rate. One of these afternoon blows set in, and things became lively; it was called a "gentle zephyr," and business went right along; so did the sand and windrows of gravel on the river bank.

Steamers were running up the Columbia to the mouth of the Snake, somewhat irregularly, thence up that river about one hundred and sixty milés, to the incipient town of Lewiston. They were flat bottomed, light draft, stern wheel boats, and would in ordinary stages of the river have little trouble to make the trip. On the up trips they were generally well loaded with freight, and progress against currents was slow; but the down trip was always light, excepting for passengers, and quick time was made. Rates were "all the traffic would bear," but money at that period was the freest thing in the market, so complaints were seldom heard.

Previous to this portion of the country being ceded to the United States, this location had been selected as a main station by the Hudson Bay Fur Company and occupied by it, being one of the best and most secure landings on the river, near the mouth of the Walla Walla. The company's

agents were never at fault in selecting a location for a depot. A post was erected and named Fort Wallah-Wallah, and for many years it was a very important factory. The buildings were strongly made and secure against Indian hostility, tho Indians seldom interfered with that company. It was an aggressive concern, and never overlooked a location where a pelt could be obtained. Every available place north of the Columbia River from the bend in the river to the north, at the intersection of the 119th degree of longitude and 46th degree of latitude, and then to the Pacific Ocean was covered by this gigantic trading company. Some of the old buildings were still standing, relics of the past.

Since changing owners the place had changed names and was thenceforth known under the romantic title of Wallula. Fort Walla Walla, after dropping the hyphen and the "h," was located as a United States military post, thirty miles inland, carrying the name with it and also supplying it to the flourishing town near by, as also to the county in which both were situated.

Wallula was showing a commendable spirit of enterprise, and in anticipation of becoming an important "city" building lots were held at a high figure. Real estate was very active on the occasion when our company was detained there, and the "rise" of property was something wonderful; lots lapped—or lopped—over on one another with true western abandon, the "transfer" being made complete in a very brief period. The wind at this point being remarkable for its strength and intense activity made real estate transfers very

lively, without the formality of a deed signed, sealed and delivered.

In the days of the Lewis and Clarke expedition the river was known as the Wollawollah; time has simplified the name and made it appear prettier in print, while losing none of the pleasant sound in pronouncing and its meaning.

Two basalt columnar formations, as shown in the accompanying illustration in the distance, are singular monuments made by nature, in some vagary, at a time when other strange things were done by water, air and volcanoes, or all combined. These columns are round, about equal in height, and are now probably hard enough to resist erosion from any cause, or even fire, unless a direct flame from a crater.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Stranded and Delayed Passengers—Our Company Divide Again—Teams Go Overland to The Dalles—Secure Passage on a Half-Finished Boat—The Captain Makes Temporary Accommodations—A Jolly Party of Pilgrims—A Grand Ride Down the Columbia—The Landing at the Des Chutes—Impassable Rapids—A Tempestuous Torrent—By Stage to Dalles City—Magnificent Scenery—The River Runs Through a Volcanic Region—Snow-Capped Peaks a Beautiful Sight—A Sunday Rest at The Dalles—Looking the City Over—The Dalles of the Columbia—High Water Mark—The Columbia the Amazon of the West—Gambling an Established Industry.

OCTOBER II.—Daybreak found a large party of stranded and anxious passengers on board a half-finished boat, steaming down on the bosom of the grand Columbia, somewhere termed, not inaptly, the Amazon of the West. The boat was not designed, in the first place, as a passenger craft, and had no passenger cabins, nor even plans for any, and but a small portion of the hold was decked over. The great rush to the newly discovered gold mines had created a sudden demand for provisions and other camp supplies, that together with all manner of implements required in mining operations, severely taxed every craft on the river, and boats multiplied; and as soon as this

boat's shell was ready to receive its machinery she was shoved into the water for her maiden voyage, and piled with freight for the upper country. It was on her return trip that this load of passengers was unexpectedly obtained.

When all was on board her prow was turned westward and she plowed her way down the Columbia at good speed. The captain—his name and that of his boat I failed to record—had lumber and ship carpenters on board to finish the upper works of his boat while she was doing duty day by day—and they good-naturedly worked all night to arrange some sort of temporary conveniences for a live cargo. By the aid of pieces of lumber, ropes, a tarpaulin and some blankets a serviceable saloon was improvised for the ladies, of which there were about twenty, in the forward hold, or 'tween decks.

A number of the passengers—having served a long apprenticeship in their own camps in that capacity, during the season—volunteered to serve as extra cooks and waiters, and the master of the boat accepted their services gratefully; a good supply of provisions for the two meals for the day, necessary for nearly two hundred persons, had been put aboard at Wallula; they had all breakfasted at a nearly hour before going on board. Thus provided for, we started out on Saturday morning, and a better satisfied, jollier party of travel-worn pilgrims never sailed down that noble stream than were stowed among the lumber piles and camping equipments on that unfinished craft. The captain enjoyed the picnic as much as any of the passengers.



COLUMBIA RIVER AT MOUTH OF DES CHUTES.



We raced down the river very rapidly for the first twenty miles under a heavy pressure of steam in the boiler, when two rivets were sprung, causing a bad leak, after which speed had to be materially reduced. A late breakfast and an early supper were prepared—good, substantial meals, well cooked—and served on a lot of as strangely assorted dishes as one could expect or wish to see. Bacon, beans, dried apples and hard tack were all omitted from the menu.

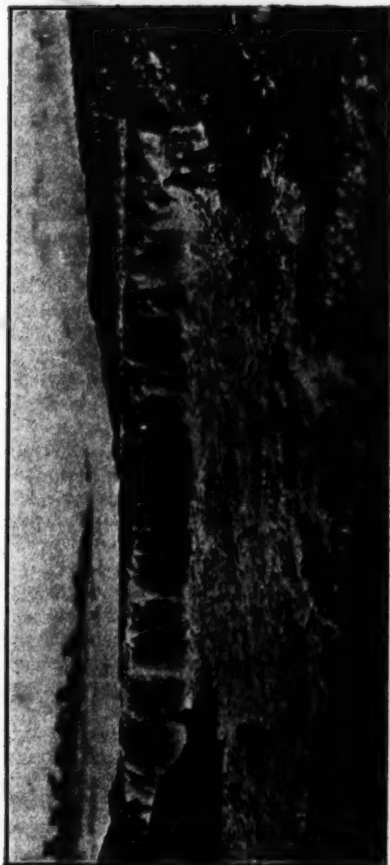
Our little craft shot three dangerous looking rapids, like a thing of life, in a speedy manner and with perfect safety; a steady, skilful hand at the wheel averted all cause for anxiety. The landing at the mouth of the Des Chutes River, the town of Celilo, was reached before dark. At this point the rapids were impassable, and thence all the passengers and their baggage and whatever other of their possessions were conveyed around the portage, fifteen miles to The Dalles, by stages: every one of the vehicles was loaded to excess inside and out. The road was deep with sand, and slow progress was made, and it was late when The Dalles, the chief city in Eastern Oregon, was reached, about one hundred and twenty-five miles from Wallula.

Between the Des Chutes and The Dalles were a succession of dangerous rapids, a menace to and interrupting navigation; the water was boiling and foaming the whole distance. The principal one of these rapids was more of a cataract, and when viewed from a point on the river bank half a mile above it presented the appearance of a tremendous whirlpool, but when seen from the rocks

below in the twilight of the early evening, it appeared a horseshoe fall of about twenty feet in depth; for a long distance below the river was a tempestuous torrent, making noisy protest against the rocky obstacles in the way of the onward rush of the mighty river.

No scenery on earth surpasses in magnificent grandeur the Columbia River—the Oregon of early in the century—for more than a thousand miles of its length. It gathers the waters of half a continent, draining an empire greater than half of Europe, and bears them onward in one broad resistless flood until they discharge into and mingle with the Pacific. The river is navigable for almost its entire length, barring the falls and rapids where portages have to be made, and for a long distance in the British dominions north of the forty-ninth parallel, where its headwaters find their source. The river has worn a deep channel among the rocks and through the granite foundations of great mountain ranges; or what is more probable, the great waterway was opened by volcanic action, if the testimony of the rocks is to be accepted as conclusive evidence. The origin of the palisades, escarpments and basalt bluffs which form the river walls for many hundred miles, was clearly through the agency of fire. These walls are often vertical from twenty-five to five hundred feet in height, piled up in tiers, evidence to the unlettered of upheaval at different periods.

For hundreds of miles through the volcanic region the iron-bound banks of the river are devoid of timber, save in isolated spots, and the



CELLO FALLS.

boundless stretches of desolate country are grand in their loneliness. The ancient bed of the river—the Grand Coulee, around which the river courses at the Great Bend—is as distinctly traced as when in the crash of worlds and formation of continents ages ago the mighty stream was forced into a new channel, nearly three hundred miles around.

From the deck of the steamer but little of the country on either side of the river could be seen, excepting in a few places where the high banks receded or another river added its waters, but we gazed with unmingled pleasure at the receding ridges of the Blue Mountains behind us and with the same feeling at the irregular features and elevations of the Cascades in front, which we were nearing and soon to pass through. The atmosphere was wonderfully clear and balmy—transparent to an unwonted degree, and snow-capped peaks a long way off among the Cascades showed up beautiful beyond expression.

Some of our passengers were emigrants bound for the fertile valleys of Western Oregon, to settle permanently and “grow up with the country;” a few were successful traders or miners from the interior; but the larger proportion had been unsuccessful in their hunt for wealth and were returning home discouraged.

The Dalles, Sunday, October 12.—All the passengers and tourists arriving in this city on Saturday from up river were detained over Sunday, as no boats moved on that day; it was a compulsory sojourn with some, as time was a prime ob-

ject and every twenty-four hours meant a serious interference with affairs if not actual loss. There were no means of transportation over the broken and lofty ridges of the Cascade Mountains; those great barriers were effectually sealed up. In addition to the impassable cañons and precipices, the mountains are heavily timbered from their crests to the Pacific Ocean, with the largest, tallest and handsomest timber forest known anywhere on earth. The Columbia River was the great artery for transportation, and pilgrims could only await the pleasure of steamboat managers to be moved from place to place. Though all other kinds of business went on unceasingly seven days in the week, recognizing no Sabbath, the river was closed to navigation, and boats and boatmen rested.

I availed myself of the opportunity offered by the "day off" to look the town over. For beauty of location, as the surroundings then appeared, Dalles City was perhaps located in as poor and inhospitable a place as could have been selected, tho the fact must be borne in mind that available locations of an ideal character for planting a city are not numerous on the banks of the Upper Columbia River. However, the city was not located for romance and scenery; there was no sentiment about it. Commercially the site was commanding and the place grew and flourished.

Just below the city is the interesting feature of the river, a narrow throat in the mountain—The Dalles of the Columbia—from which comes the name of the city. Through this narrow gorge—an opening in basaltic rock about one hundred



MOUNT HOOD.

yards wide—the whole volume of the river flows, and the restricted portals during the periods of annual floods arising from melting snows are insufficient to pass the great accumulation of water rapidly enough at all times to avert damage. The periodical freshet this year, as noted on the east slope of the continent, had been unprecedented, the water rising forty-five feet above high-water mark—which really meant nearly ninety feet from low water. The Dalles—meaning narrow passage—was a barrier no power could overcome, and the water backed up, flooding the part of the city next the river, causing great damage to buildings and streets.

It had been found necessary to obtain boat-loads of stone—and it might be remarked here that rock abounded around The Dalles—and dump them on the floors of the buildings to prevent them from floating off; and it took many tons of stone to prevent the houses going down with the rush of water. At the time the notes of this memoir were made, the mud line was well defined up to the windows of the second stories of the buildings on the main street, parallel to the river. A steamboat of good size had broken away from her moorings somewhere above and floated around the city and had become lodged among great boulders a long distance back from the river, and there become a wreck. The machinery of the boat had been removed, but the frame and ribs of the hull remained among the rocks as a monument to the fury of an unprecedented Columbia River flood.

At the beginning of the Salmon River and

other gold-mining fevers in the interior basin, the government had made haste to erect a fine stone building at Dalles City, designed for an assaying adjunct to the mint. The building had not been completed, but had been abandoned for some reason unknown to ordinary mortals and stood solemn and deserted like some ancient ruin, peopled only by the bats and owls.

The beautiful and lofty peaks, Mount Hood, Mount Adams and St. Helens, which rise from the Cascade range as pillars of eternal snow, as if to guard the river passage on either side, are sentinels seen for more than a hundred miles and add an enchantment not to be forgotten. Mount Hood, the pride of Oregon, reaches an elevation of 11,225 feet; St. Helens and Mount Adams are in Eastern Washington, the first a little less in altitude than Hood, St. Helens being 9,750 feet, and Adams a little higher, being 11,906 feet above sea level. Their symmetrical forms towering among the clouds in isolated grandeur and gathering snow for centuries in clear weather, glisten in the sunlight like marble shafts.

The gambling resorts here—which seem to be omnipresent where money circulates freely—were numerous, and some of them were gorgeous in appointments. They were well patronized, the play never ceasing, the industry being a continuous performance. The "tenderfoot" visitor saw more gold piled on the gaming tables—twenty dollar pieces almost exclusively—than he ever dreamed of in his limited philosophy. I watched operations until midnight and saw scores of infatuated victims to the gambling fever skinned



MOUNT ADAMS.

with neatness and dispatch. This procession to and from the green-covered tables was constant, an endless chain of sheep to be shorn. My interest in the dozen or more games, as spectator, ceased at midnight, but at that hour there was no diminution of the crowd around the tables. Apparently every man possessed of a piece of money had determined to risk it, win or lose; it usually resulted in the latter.

The first movement that gave importance to Dalles City was the location and maintenance of a military post there during the years when Indians in the northwest were on the war path and constantly making trouble. This place was a particularly advantageous strategic point, and was a safe and strong two-company post known as Fort Dalles. As the work for the military arm has ceased, the post was no longer of value and had been abandoned. It was but natural for a city to spring up near the fort, and it has flourished ever since.

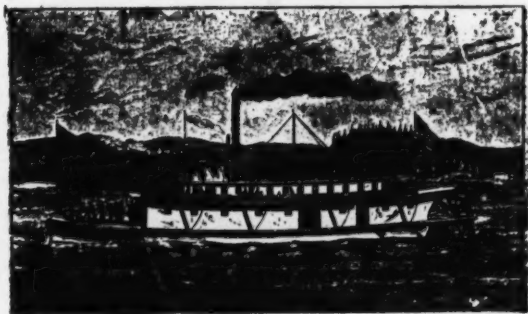
CHAPTER XXXVII.

From The Dalles at Daydawn—By Steamboat to the Cascades—A Large Passenger List—A Wonderful Water Gap—Grand Scenery—The Columbia the Boundary—The Cascades—The Last Cataract of the Columbia—A Tremendous Power—Making the Portage of the Cascades—"Shooting" the Cascade Rapids—A Thrilling Experience—Discouraged and Lonely Looking Indians—Indians Once Masters Here—Grand Scenery—Quoting Poetry—Steamboat to Portland—A Wonderful Region—Multnomah Falls—Vancouver, an Old Trading, Now a Military Post—Ancient Stories—The City of Portland—The Commercial Emporium of Oregon—Grand Mountain Peaks—A Wonderful Panorama.

MONDAY, October 13.—The first evidence of daydawn found our little party again on board steamer, resuming our journey down the Columbia, still westward. The boat, a stern-wheeler, called the Umatilla, as a distinguishing title, was a fine piece of early day marine architectural design and rode the water gracefully. She was loaded comfortably, there being about one hundred and fifty passengers on board, those who had collected at Dalles City from Saturday evening awaiting the Monday morning departure. They were uniformly friendly, and as a rule were traveled and intelligent, and lessened the tedious hours of the trip by entertaining conversation. It

was an experience almost indescribable and a relief beyond words to express, to be privileged to sit on the forward deck of a boat and note passing scenery and not be obliged to watch carefully every step advanced to prevent a wagon from lurching, fearful of certain destruction; it was a strange but pleasing change.

It was but a brief time when the boat had passed through the narrow throat in the moun-



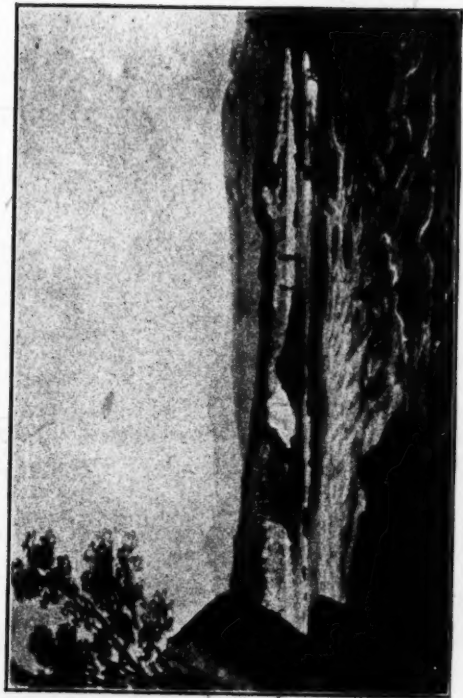
COLUMBIA RIVER STEAMER.

tains, that remarkable gap, or opening, The Dalles, and in less than an hour we were steaming through the grand gorge of the lower or westward mountains of the Cascade range.

As we progressed the scenery on either side of the river assumed a superlatively grand appearance; conversation seemed out of place amid such lofty grandeur; one wished only to look, wonder

and admire in silence; words would have spoiled the tremendous scenic effect of the mountain marvels. The frequent sounding of the steamer whistle—given only for echoing effect—seemed like a blast from some distant unearthly force, as the noise rolled among the mountains and then back again. For a time the great river was walled in by high rocky bluffs on either side, rising abruptly in places to the height of fifteen hundred feet sheer above the water, the shores deep and safe. This gorge and the sides of the mountains and the cañons through them are heavily timbered with the evergreen, cedar and fir, which add much to the natural beauty of the panorama. The Columbia River, from a point near Wallula to the Pacific Ocean, is the well-defined boundary between Oregon and Washington.

At nine o'clock we reached the head of one of the marked features of the Columbia, the Cascades, where the river is broken into a series of wild and dangerous rapids. Around this succession of cascades, or cataracts, a portage was necessary, and the navigation company had constructed, at great cost and considerable engineering skill, a timber tramway over which to transport passengers and merchandise. It was not possible to pass these furious rapids in any other way, so abrupt are the granite walls of the river, only at the risk of life and property, as in the days of old voyageurs. The expense of hewing out the way and constructing this portage road added greatly to the cost of transportation. Gravitation was the motive power on the down grade, mules



CASCADE OF THE COLUMBIA.



being utilized to transport the flat cars up. Most passengers preferred to walk in both directions.

At the foot of the last rapids everything was passed down a steep incline on cars secured to a cable loop, the loaded car going down serving to send the light one up. At the foot of the incline another boat was in waiting, moored in water smooth and tranquil. From this point to the ocean there were no more obstructions to navigation, and the river is a broad, magnificent stream.

As threatening and dangerous as the foaming rapids through these Cascades were, old traders and voyageurs used to navigate them at a period when the volume of the water in the river was favorable, taking their batteaux through ordinarily with safety, but always with great risk. A few years later, after the trip was taken which this story details, when the mines had almost entirely failed and other lines of communication had been opened to the interior, about half the steamboats above the Cascades were out of use and comparatively valueless; Mr. John W. Brazee, the Chief Engineer of the O. S. N. Co.—Oregon Steam Navigation Company—took several boats down through these fearful rapids at high water, going through each time in perfect safety. Only a man of wonderful judgment and of fearless nature would have undertaken such a perilous journey with a prospect of plunging to certain destruction for the slightest miscalculation or deviation from the channel.

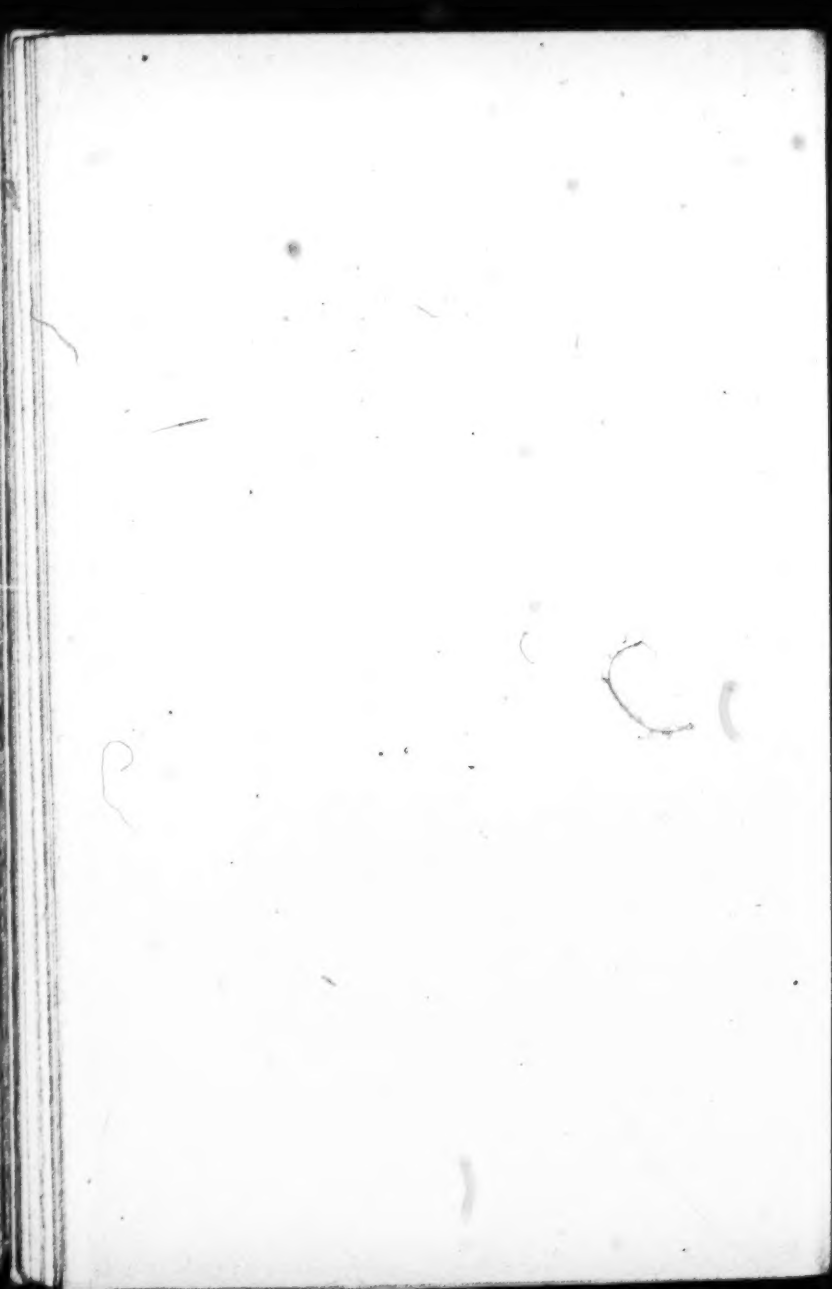
At a number of places along the rapids, perched among the rocks, were several lonely and discouraged looking Indians engaged in fishing. It

was but a comparatively short time since a powerful tribe of Indians assumed the mastery and in effect ownership of this great water gap, and disputed the passage of everything through the mountains, often levying a tribute which amounted to the entire possessions of the luckless navigator; perhaps, taking the adventurers' life beside; this tribute was levied against all but the servants and property of the Hudson Bay Company; the voyageurs of that company were seldom molested. Now this once powerful Indian tribe, sadly reduced in numbers, was driven to the necessity of fishing for a precarious living, and commerce passed up and down unmolested. Things have changed, the fittest have survived.

The boat below the rapids was a Hudson River palace in miniature, the Willamette. The dinner served to a large assemblage was excellent and abundant. The scenery continued grand, and was a continuous wonder, and the minds of all, even of those who were familiar with it, were occupied in again contemplating its expansive beauty. Castle Rock, a singular pillar of primeval stone arising up near the river to a height of twelve hundred feet, is a wonderful landmark, and is ever of geological interest to the tourist or emigrant, while Multnomah Falls, precipitated from the heights, add a beauty which can nowhere else be found. The water plunges over the rim of the rocky wall eight hundred feet or more high, in a solid sheet, but breaks and sways in the air and finally reaches the Columbia in a misty spray, like a veil of gorgeous hues in the sunlight. The captain of the boat steered near enough to the falls



MULTNOMAH FALLS.



for the passengers to feel the damp mist. A remarkable point of rocks jutting into the river, known as Cape Horn, is distinguished thus because of high winds and the delays it occasions to navigation. It is a bold high buttress of solid rock, extending out into deep water, against which the winds dash the water with such violence as at times to be a source of danger.

No river in the world possesses grander and more attractive scenery than the Columbia, and, perhaps, no passengers ever passed over its broad and placid surface, possessing any poetic feeling, but called to mind the words of Bryant:

* * * Where rolls the Oregon
Which hears no sound save its own dashing.

One is excusable for wandering into regions of pictorial and poetic fancy. Mount Hood and Saint Helens, the beauties of the Cascade range, came frequently into view, awe-inspiring sentinels forever guarding the water gap for the passage of the Columbia.

This grand river drains an area of 245,000 square miles, much more than half of this vast surface being east of the Cascade Mountains. It is a bewildering array of figures to comprehend and one's mental capacity is tested in an effort to realize by an established boundary how much of the continent is involved in such a statement of the limits of this watershed.

At sunset we passed the military post and city of Vancouver on the Washington shore of the river. The fine location of the place was a noticeable evidence of good judgment displayed by

those who long ago founded this trading post and fortified it against predatory Indians before the United States assumed control. Soon after leaving Vancouver our boat rounded the point which separates the rivers and entered the Willamette, and we were within the confines of the State of Oregon. Late in the evening the steamer was made fast to the dock at the city of Portland, and her passengers sought hotel accommodations after a trip of a hundred and twenty miles from The Dalles, on a river and amid scenery already thrice described, the grandest to be found on earth. The memory of that ride possesses an ineffaceable charm which time serves to perpetuate in its pristine beauty rather than to diminish.

One of the pastimes on the boat among the passengers who were "Oregon Pioneers" of at least one year's standing, was to tell the newcomer—or "tenderfoot"—about the climatic freaks of Western Oregon, where it rains so much that the inhabitants become amphibious, their feet being webbed like ducks, etc.; that the girls had to knit their stockings with toes to them, like fingers of a glove, to prevent the webs from growing; all of which was exceedingly entertaining and gave great delight to the narrators. The number of times this story was seriously told can only be estimated by the rule of comparisons in the number of times the story of the soldier from Fort Yuma and his blankets has been repeated, or that other equally captivating and inviting romance about the remark of the Governor of North Carolina to the Governor of South Carolina. These stories move in cycles and can be relied on to ap-



CASTLE ROCK.

pear every decade, perhaps oftener. The fish stories repeated on the trip were a trifle stiff to many who heard them the first time, but they were afterwards shown to be far short of the actual truth, in describing the size and number of Columbia River salmon.

Portland, Oregon, October 14.—As time was essential in that the fall term of the court at Olympia was soon to convene, Judge Hewitt, accompanied by his family, departed this morning by boat, resuming the journey down the river en route for that destination. I remained behind for the purpose of meeting those who were in charge of the teams and wagons, to assume the care of them from that point, and take them through to destination.

I found Portland a new and decidedly crude-looking city, but there was abundant evidence that it contained a pushing, go-ahead class of business men who had aspirations above eternally delving in a limited measure of space, with uncouth, wild, depressing surroundings. These men were largely new, even to a new city, but there was an activity among wholesalers and shippers that assured for the future all the success anticipated. The city was founded on the west bank of the Willamette River, one hundred and ten miles from the Pacific Ocean, and, like many another city, not in a place naturally as favorable for building up a great mercantile center without the expenditure of vast sums of money, and calling in the aid of the best engineering skill to overcome many great defects in sur-

face and surroundings which nature had interposed. The Portland of to-day is an evidence of the faith which her earnest citizens and builders possessed in that early period.

The site was carved out of the great forest of heavy timber which covered the whole region; the soil was deep, almost bottomless, especially after the great winter rains commenced. The principal business was transacted on Front street, next to the river. The docks on the river front were two and three-storied affairs, made thus to accommodate the high, low and intermediate stages of the water in the river.

The city was founded long before the discovery of gold in the "upper country," and was and is the chief commercial mart of Western Oregon and the Columbia River basin. The State of Oregon was peopled and subdued long anterior to the discovery of gold over any considerable extent of country anywhere on the Pacific coast, and her people were never, in the common use of the phrase, "gold hunters," that is, by rushing here and there to mining centers in pursuit of the valuable metal; they appeared content to get it by exchanging the products of their wonderfully productive farms for it.

The days I passed in Portland were not devoid of interest, and I wandered around the place and clambered up over the hills surrounding the city, among the rough places and fallen timber, securing active exercise, if nothing more. The weather was fine and the atmosphere transparently clear, and I enjoyed a primeval panorama of vast extent. On the top of a high hill I sat and



ROOSTER ROCK.

rested on a fallen monarch of the wilderness, and marveled at the expanse and tremendous grandeur in the vast and glittering picture spread out before me. To the south and east the Cascade range of mountains reared their snow crowned summits until lost in the dim distance, guarded by Mount Hood, which towers up nearly two and a half miles. To the north, St. Helens, graceful in proportion and regular in form as tho chiseled out of frozen snow, pierces the clouds; further north stands Mount Rainier, reaching up fourteen thousand four hundred and forty-four feet in ethereal blue, the highest peak on the Pacific coast, in the Cascade range, while further away appeared Mount Adams and Mount Baker, all glittering in the sunlight of that beautiful October day, and all of them looking as tho they were put there as grand white columns to prop up the skies, silent monuments of earth's convulsions. Smoky atmosphere, cloudy weather and "Scotch mist" too often shut out this enchanting scene, even from those who live on the spot where I passed half a day in 1862.

The early missionaries to Oregon might have stood with me on that mountain top that day and sung with a feeling born of unwonted beauty, the lines of that old "Missionary Hymn":

"Where every prospect pleases
And only man is vile;"

and it would have been true in a deeper sense than among the islands of the South Seas.

The city was filled with people—more than "16 to 1" being of the male sex—miners returning

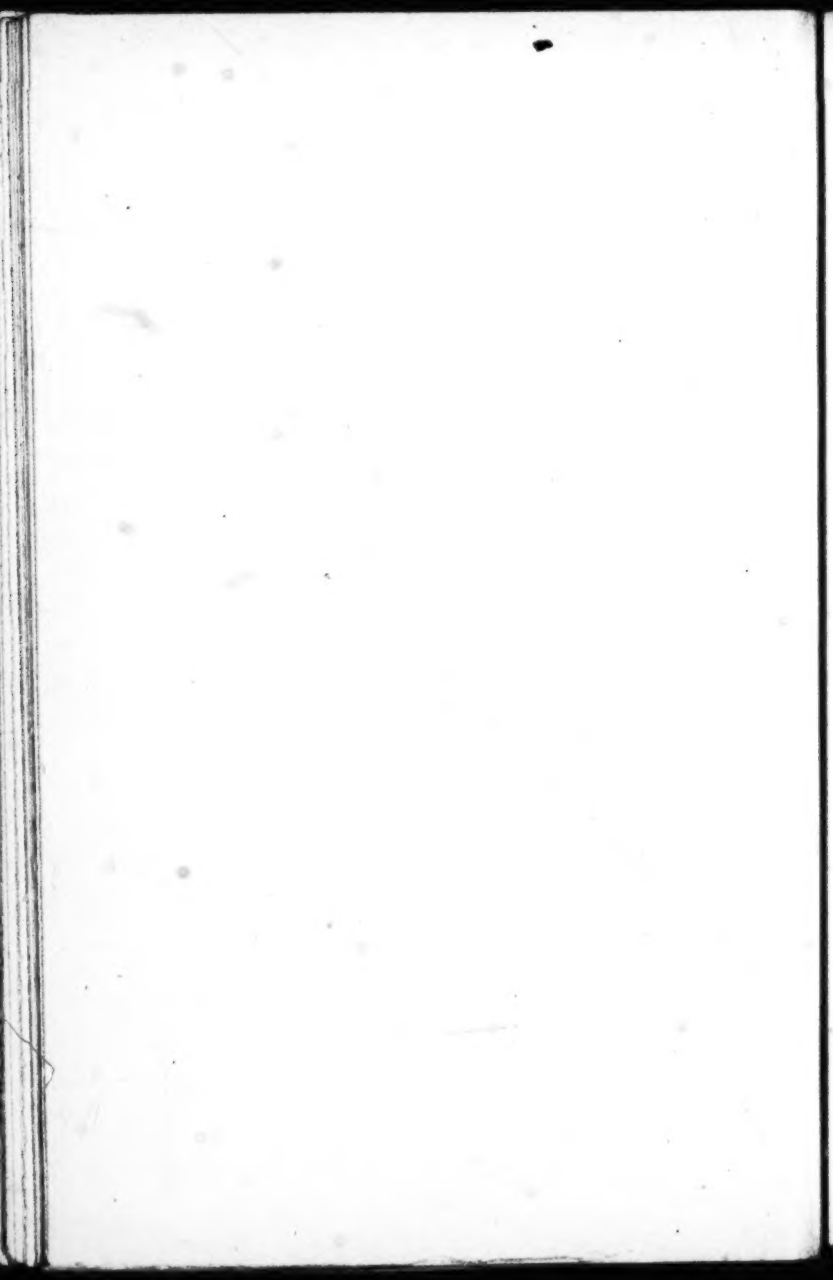
from the interior to pass the winter in Portland or San Francisco, and adventurers of every grade and nation, out for what they could get without risk or labor. Gambling resorts were numerous and invitingly held out inducements in good music and tempting lunch to every one with "dust" or coin to enter and toy with the god of chance; gold was there in abundant measure, heaped high and lavishly on every gaming table; but many who went into the gilded palaces afterwards wished they had remained away.

In 1860 Portland was credited by the United States census with twenty-eight hundred and seventy-four inhabitants. In 1862, the population was, perhaps, nearly double that number. The dull, tiresome, monotonous round of life on the plains was very much changed when I was suddenly ushered into the whirl of active city life and business, and the change had an exhilarating effect. Portland being a seaport town, deep sea steamships and sailing vessels visit the city at all seasons with but occasional interruption. Wherever there are passengers and freight to be transported ships will find them.

The appearance of Portland, immediately outside of the business section, at this period of its existence, was far from agreeable, owing to the enormous growth of timber which had originally covered the flat portion of the site and the hills back. The streets had been surveyed and mapped, intersecting regularly, and some of them cleared and put in good condition, at great expense, but for the most part the big trees had been cut down, leaving the stumps everywhere about



PORTLAND.



ten feet high, large in diameter, and sound as could be, involving great labor to remove them. Among these countless stumps the streets—mere meandering trails—wormed around to the outskirts of the city. Such obstructions, however, were slight obstacles in the way of progress, and stumps, hills and hollows all rapidly disappeared as Portland pushed forward.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A Delay of Nine Days—Getting Anxious—A Cross Country Trip to Vancouver—A Short Distance, But a Long Tramp—Ferrying Over the Columbia in a Skiff—Another Detention—A Survey of Vancouver—The Train Arrives—Gathering the Outfit Together—Back at Portland—Company Finally Disband—A Final Farewell—Alone with the Train—Portland to Monticello—Down the Lower Columbia on Sunday—A Magnificent River—The Cowlitz River—Wonderful Forests—Resting the Animals—Another Gun Trade—Start for Olympia—A Volunteer Driver—Rain, Mud, Deep Forest, Darkness.

VANCOUVER, October 22.—The nine days spent in Portland were by no means profitless, but as "a stranger in a strange land," time began to drag wearily. As nothing had been or could be heard from those who were bringing the wagon train down by land and water, I began to grow restless. Vancouver, Washington, and Portland, Oregon, are but six miles apart in an air line—and "as the birds fly"—but they are eighteen miles distant by water. Between the two cities are two rivers, the Willamette and the Columbia, and the Willamette slough cuts almost in twain the peninsula which separates the two rivers.

Boats for the upper river left at an early hour, on regular sailing schedule, but about 9 o'clock on

this especial morning I concluded to make this cross-country trip, hoping to intercept the remnant of the train. That trip was a much bigger thing than I anticipated when I started, but it came out all right. I first ferried over the Wilamette, paying twenty-five cents therefor, then walked some distance to the bank of the slough; here I found a boy willing to put me on the other side for fifty cents; then I walked through underbrush and fallen timber over a trail which may have been clear ten years before, to the south bank of the Columbia. At this point a "squatter" had located, who with his family lived close to the river bank, in a cabin a little larger than a steamboat state room. I bargained with him for a late dinner, for half a dollar—it was a "square meal," too—and to be transported over the Columbia—at this point nearly two miles wide—for two dollars, to be landed at Vancouver before dark.

I served as "bos'n" and steered the craft; heading up stream, quartering against the steady current of the Columbia, we made the crossing just at dark. I have always thought that the man at the oars earned his money, as it was as good as a five-mile row; but he was a brawny woodsman and used to that kind of exercise and did not appear to mind it. The cost of this six-mile trip was three dollars and a quarter; regular fare by steamer one dollar; but I offset the difference against the pleasure of that boat ride on a warm fall day over that grand river at its most beautiful point.

At Vancouver I was destined to sojourn a week, and I put in the time as best I might. The

weather was delightful and the week passed quickly. I there met Judge E. R. Oliphant, one of the judges of the territory and found him a very entertaining gentleman; I attended one of the marriage fetes, spoken of in the first chapter of this narrative—the parties being a runaway couple from Oregon. The marriage was a quiet affair, but the interested ones seemed to be in something of a hurry to have the ceremony over.

I was as industrious as it was possible to be in a small town, in looking over the urban and sub-urban situation. Few places in the country can boast of a finer natural location than Vancouver; the gently sloping land a long distance back from the river made an ideal town site, and the deep river channel affords safe passage for large deep sea ships and steamers at all times, except it might be at unusually low water. It was an important military post during the frequent wars with Indians in the interior, and from its superior location it will, perhaps, always remain a military station. Many of the great chiefs in both northern and southern armies had been stationed there previous to the Civil War, as also at other points further inland and nearer the coast; they were all well known in the northwest. The town was named after an English navigator and was originally a factory of great importance and distributing point, established by the Hudson Bay Fur Company. The town had grown up around the post, and was really dependent on it for existence; but there was evident appearance of a permanent prosperity.

The chief duty of the soldiers, as far as could



VANCOUVER.



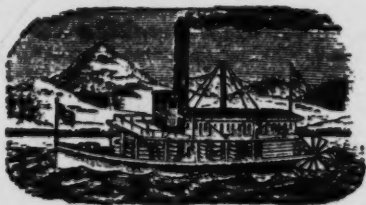
be observed, was to march from saloon to saloon during the day and imbibe freely of the brands on tap and to crowd the hurdy-gurdy dance halls during the evening; the partners in the dance would sometimes be a white woman and sometimes it would be a half-bred squaw; but the soldiers were not fastidious. This was enough to keep the officer of the day busy, so there was no want of active military duty.

On Saturday evening the usual heavily loaded boat arrived, crowded with passengers, freight and stock; among them were the ones for whom I had been two weeks impatiently waiting, and once more I took passage for Portland. I went down on the lower deck among the animals to see if our mules would know me, and, metaphorically speaking, shook hands with every one of them; they all knew me and brayed a modified recognition and wagged their big ears in acknowledgment of my salutation. Especially demonstrative was old Tom, the one I rode over the "Hog's back" divide in the Bitter Roots among the grizzly bear tracks.

Columbia River, Sunday, October 26.—It is the unexpected which happens. Navigation, as before stated, ceased on the river on Sunday, but as a boat was to be dispatched down the river to-day to take her regular place in the line, running from Astoria, near the mouth of the river, I was fortunate enough to secure passage for my outfit to Monticello, forty miles. The boat was the Multnomah, Captain Thayer. The craft was a small stern wheeler—small by comparison to the regu-

lar liners—one of a lower river fleet intended for visiting every landing and shallow river as an accommodation boat, but of sufficient capacity for all purposes required.

My second visit to Portland was acceptably brief. Goodrich and Mullen assisted in getting to the dock and stowing the wagons and animals on board; we bade each other adieu as the boat left the dock, and the last element of our party which had held well together for seven months



MULNOMAH STEAMBOAT.

of mutual toil, trial and hardship, was thus disbanded.

Mullen was swallowed up in the great human maelstrom and was never heard of after that parting; he had been a valued man during that laborious journey, careful, willing and reliable, and I regretted that our ways parted so completely, I never hearing from him; but I hope he prospered. Goodrich remained in Portland for the winter, working at his trade—and he was skilled in the art of Tubal Cain—in the spring going to Boise, and subsequently returning to his

home in New York. I have aimed in this narrative to report each person starting out with us or connected in direct manner to be "present or accounted for." That all our company reached the destination desired, in good health and without accident, was a fact to be thankful for and one worthy of note; many a party was not so favored.

The run down the Willamette, ten miles to where it and the Columbia merge, was soon accomplished. The day was one of unsurpassed loveliness and the surface of the great, broad river was as smooth and placid as the bosom of a land-locked lake, reflecting objects floating on its surface like a magnified, highly polished mirror; the current was hardly perceptible, as it was carrying only a normal flow of water. Portland, one hundred and ten miles inland by river, is but fifty-three feet above sea level, so naturally the river current would be very slack.

The heavily timbered banks and distant hills were a charming change from the glaring barrenness of the region east of the Cascades, the soft, green color of the foliage being nature's careful provision for the protection of human eyes and the absorbing of rays of sunlight. The ever present and enduring monuments, St. Helens and Mount Hood, were constantly before us.

That ride was as a dreamland picture done on a scale munificent in size and magnificent in detail. Toward evening we reached the landing at the little settlement of Monticello, two miles above the mouth of the Cowlitz and went ashore in Washington Territory again.

The high water line along both banks of the

river was distinctly shown, marked by a deposit of mud over the bottom lands and on the trees and underbrush growing near the water, as well as by driftwood and whatever washes out from above and is carried down with the current. The river is subject to an annual freshet and overflow, incident to the melting of the snow in the great interior basin to the north and east, which commences about the first of June. The high water in the Columbia and Missouri rivers occurs at the same time, as both rivers have Rocky Mountain sources which are within a few feet of each other, up to and beyond the forty-ninth parallel, and the same warm weather operates in both cases alike; the waters are discharged into the Atlantic and Pacific oceans at the same time.

The current in the Columbia below the Cascades, at normal stage, is not rapid, being near sea level; but when the flood water comes down it develops tremendous energy, running with great velocity. It backs up into the Willamette, making the two and three-floored docks necessary, covers all the low lands and drives farmers and cattle raisers to the foothills. At such times the Columbia is in no mood to be trifled with. The amount of water which goes down to the ocean to supply the loss by evaporation is beyond human ken to comprehend.

Marked characteristics are distinguishing features of the great river systems of the western portion of the continent. The Mississippi and Missouri rivers cut their devious ways for nearly their entire length through soil and sand of the

level plains and prairies, changing their freaky channels at will, turn in every direction, cut away banks and bluffs with ease, bearing the accumulated sediment annually to the Gulf, depositing the same on the delta, far away from the ancient mouth of the Mississippi, discoloring even the waters of the Caribbean Sea. The Columbia, on the other hand, flows until the last hundred miles of its course, along a channel broken and prepared by volcanic power—without the bewildering bends and curves of the first named rivers—aligning and through vast mountain ranges, composed chiefly of basalt rock as hard and as unyielding as iron, its wear for a thousand years being imperceptible. The evidence of erosion in most of the region drained by the Columbia east of the Cascades is slight. The last evident volcanic upheaval was west of the plains through which the Missouri River runs, a vast amphitheatre where subterranean fires have smouldered and then broken out to disport and frolic in the marvelous manner volcanoes are known to do. The same conditions measurably obtain in the basin of the Rio Colorado, as exists along the Columbia, to the extent of volcanic action, tho for several hundred miles the Colorado has worn a bed more than a mile deep, down into the bowels of the earth, carrying the detritus with the headlong current until it has filled the north portion of the Gulf of California, crowding back the salt water from millions of acres of land, covering it with the red silt of the river banks, reclaiming one portion and consigning another portion to desert

as naked and terrible as anything which the headwaters leave behind.

Monticello, October 27.—From the exhausted condition of the animals it was found necessary to remain here two days in order for them to rest and recuperate. As good pasturage was at hand—such pasturage as they had not been privileged to enjoy since their colthood days—they were turned into it. But another condition confronted me. Here I was alone with two wagons and ten mules and a wilderness drive of a hundred miles before me; how to prepare for it and accomplish the concluding part of the journey was a problem to be solved before the trip commenced.

The wagons containing all the camp equipage and a considerable quantity of personal effects were put in the stage company's enclosure for security, and I camped in one at night. Numerous unemployed Indians—belonging to a remnant of the Cowlitz tribe—were constantly loitering around, and the Indian instinct seems to be a natural one to annex himself to any portable property within reach. One of this band—the largest and best looking man of the lot—caught sight of my rifle, which had hung untouched in the big wagon since leaving Deer Lodge valley, and he appeared to be over-anxious to look at it, and came at me several times with his jargon, which was all Hindoo to me. At the instance of the stableman, who understood the lingo, I permitted him to take it; as it was still loaded, I allowed him to fire it off; he was greatly pleased at his achievement, and when satisfied with his

examination, he handed it back, indicating his pleasure.

For safety I took the rifle to the hotel and gave it into the keeping of the steward. The Indian followed, and got that gentleman to open negotiations for its purchase; it had caught his eye from its fine finish and large calibre, and he yearned to own it. The Indian had no money, but he was anxious to trade "pish" in any amount for it; and I had no use for fish. The negotiation finally resulted in my selling the gun to the steward for twenty-five dollars; he in turn sold it to the Indian to be paid for in salmon, a given amount to be delivered every morning in time for the Portland boat.

That was a happy Indian; he came around and shook hands with me, clucked out something intended to express pleasure and patted the gun as one would a pet dog. I was entirely satisfied with my second profitable gun speculation and the steward did well, also, as he informed me that the fish the Indian delivered he sent to Portland and realized about sixty dollars for; so much for knowing how to trade with the nation's wards.

Monticello was not a very pretentious place, and was pleasantly situated in a bend of the Cowlitz River. A number of farms had been opened and fine orchards were growing. Around this place on both sides of the river and on the side of the peninsula facing the Columbia lived many of the early Washington pioneers, peaceably, and in a great measure, prosperously. It was the landing for steamboats up and down the Columbia, to and from Portland, and all passengers for Puget

Sound took stage here. The Cowlitz river takes its rise from the foot of Mount Rainier.

The Hudson Bay Company had a warehouse on the river bank which had been maintained from the early history of the company in the territory. Five or six years after the period of which I write, an unprecedented flood came down the Cowlitz River, and, sweeping over the peninsula, destroyed and ruined everything, carrying away buildings and depositing driftwood, sand, boulders and all manner of debris, burying the orchards almost entirely from sight. Nothing was left of the little settlement but a memory and the "Sage of Monticello," in whose honor it was named, has no memento on the coast.

October 26.—That "all things come to him who waits," is a theory unsafe to rely on as a rule, but in my case it proved quite true. A passenger arriving to-day from up river was desirous of obtaining passage to Olympia by some conveyance which would enable him to stop at stations or farm houses along the way; he was a dentist, out for business, and had his regulation kit of implements with him. He and I met on common ground; he wanted transportation, and I wanted a driver, and I did not much care how often he stopped along the road; a combination was quickly formed, and the next day, the 29th, was fixed upon as the time to make the start.

October 29.—We started on the road at a reasonable hour in the morning, my new acquaintance driving the carriage and I the "four-in-

hand," the extra mules were hitched so as to lead, the irrepressible "donkey" being supplied with his favorite saddle and permitted to follow, which he did faithfully. The road was along the river bottom, rich alluvial deposits of centuries; the time we made seemed to indicate that speed was the slightest consideration in the world. When we reached the "Twelve-mile house," at the foot of the mountains, it was near night, and we halted. Having made no provision for camping, it was necessary to provide commissary supplies at places where accommodations could be arranged for as needed.

I had been coached somewhat in regard to the road to be traversed and aimed to divide the distances in convenient parts so the drives could be accomplished without serious trouble; this I arranged before I had an experience with forest roads in Washington Territory. How easy it ever is to provide for things "in your mind!"

October 30.—The morning opened dark and gloomy, raining lightly. As we had what was known as Cowlitz Mountain to surmount—generally conceded by those who knew the mountain and the facilities for transit to be a long day's journey with the best transportation obtainable, with no stopping place—we made a daybreak start to endeavor to clear the mountain before it rained sufficiently to affect the road, and to reach the stage station on the north side before night. The story had been repeatedly told that it had rained but very little so far during the season. But the newcomer is at first poorly qualified to

gauge what a "very little" rain means in Western Washington or Oregon, as the people there know it.

Fortunately the clouds cleared away by ten o'clock, and the remainder of the day was clear and pleasant. The road from the start was very hilly, each succeeding elevation being rougher and more difficult than the previous one; it was a constant climb, and the roads were of a certainty as rough as primitive chaos. An enormous growth of timber, chiefly the Douglas fir, covered the whole country; the other kinds were cedars and a liberal admixture of vine and soft maple; everything grew luxuriantly; the road had been laid out among these hills and trees with all "the dips, spurs and angles" to be imagined.

We proceeded with fair speed until afternoon, when we found ourselves in a section of concentrated discomfort; for seven miles that piece of road was remarkable for being the worst—without being dangerous—in many respects, that wagon wheels ever passed over—and this story recounts some bad ones. This stretch was a continuous series of mud holes, axle deep, boulders, stumps, great roots and all manner of concealed obstructions; avoiding them was out of the question. We forced our way along hour after hour, threatened with destruction at every lurch. In places trees of monstrous size had been uprooted by the wind and fallen across the path, rendering the passage more difficult. "Night drew her sable curtains down," while we were still floundering through this horrible place, on a down grade. The moon struggled to be an aid to us,



but the forest was so dense and the trees so tall that but a few feeble rays could penetrate to the earth; even the sunlight seldom reached the ground here; everything was fairly black, and we groped our way along in the darkness, knowing we were keeping the road only by the mud holes, into which the poor mules plunged unhesitatingly.

The little remaining strength of the animals was sadly taxed in this long stretch; one of them became mired in the mud and had to be assisted out of it. Saving this incident we were spared accident, and at 9 o'clock drove up to "Drew's Station," a worn down, muddy outfit. I saw that the animals were well cared for, but my companion and I preferred rest and sleep to making an effort to obtain supper.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Regulating Molars and Incisors—A Killing Frost—The Cowlitz a Handsome Prairie—A Long Struggle—A Dark and Tedious Drive—Mud Holes a Hold-Over Crop—Weary Animals—The Cascade Mountains—Grand Old Mount Rainier—Old Block-House Fortifications—Take Either Road and Wish You Had Taken the Other—Heavy Forest—A Penetrating Rain Unheeded—Home Almost in Sight—Turn Water a Pretty Town—Olympia Reached—Home at Last—The Long Journey Over—About Olympia the Territorial Capital—A Crude Little Settlement—A Closing Tribute.

OCTOBER 31.—Very soon after an early breakfast my dental companion had as much as he could attend to for some time in regulating the molars and incisors of the people of the household; he worked rapidly and effectively, I judged, and exhibited a number of offending teeth as an evidence of his activity; it was an early winter harvest for him.

A heavy frost during the night made a stinging atmosphere in the morning to start out in. The frost was the first killing one of the season, and its blighting effects were visible on all the vegetable kingdom. By the advice of experienced persons we left the main or new road and took what was called the old one. After a short

drive through a belt of woods over roads typical of that timbered region we entered Cowlitz prairie, a beautiful and fertile expanse. It had been heretofore occupied by the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, an offshoot of the Hudson Bay Company—a wheel within a wheel—the latter company being by its charter precluded from holding land or entering into agricultural pursuits.

Quite a settlement had sprung up around the company's old central station, and apparently the community had formerly flourished; but owing to the "irrepressible conflict" going on between aggressive settlers and the remnants of the company's old servants—the company as such having been required to abandon the country—everything was going to decay. The buildings connected with the trading company were rude specimens of old-time log architecture, badly afflicted with old age; the enclosures were hedged about with superannuated rail fences, all tumbling down and making a sad looking picture of neglect and desolation. In bright contrast were the neat dwellings and tidy enclosures of the energetic settlers scattered about on the same prairie.

The struggles between the servants of the old company who became American citizens and sought to hold some of these lands by preemption, and those who tried to prevent it were marked with a line of legal conflicts and serious neighborhood tragedies which long served to keep up the uniform frontier history written on unfading parchment in characters of blood. Oftentimes the record was burned in deep by conflagrations

which lit up the heavens by lurid flames, which no one could account for.

Beyond this large prairie were others of lesser size, separated by belts of timber; through these the roads were not difficult. The noon halt was made at John R. Jackson's place, on a prairie named for him, where we were entertained royally. On starting out in the afternoon we were assured that "they be housen on the wa'," though the old gentleman neglected to inform us that every one of the "housen" were abandoned.

Night overtook us before we reached the Newakum River. The absence of a bridge made fording necessary. Plunging down a steep bank to the river bed was easy enough, but once down it was as dark as the bottomless pit; not a lunar ray could ever hope to penetrate the thick foliage overhead. Mounting a mule I prospected for a practicable crossing, and in the search we both received a good soaking. A winding way out was at last discovered, and a crossing effected with but little difficulty. From there on to the open prairie, about two miles, the road through the forest was narrow, crooked and unspeakably muddy. The wagons and mules repeatedly sounded for the depth of the mud holes with uncertain success. At eleven o'clock that night we roused a settler from his comfortable slumber and obtained the privilege of quartering our stock in his hay barn. Buried in our blankets under the wagon covers, and supperless, was a luxurious ending of a hard day for my companion and myself.

Words are hardly forcible enough to describe

a trip over the roads in Washington Territory in early times, tho the roads were as good as the few isolated, hardy pioneers could make them through the heaviest timbered country in the world. Only those who found it necessary to attempt to navigate them can adequately describe their condition, and in that description would be a good many emphatic words, spelled wholly in capitals.

It had really rained but little so far this year, and the roads we were assured in all confidence were good in comparison to what might be expected when the rainy season was fully on. The mud holes we had encountered during the two days past we were told were holdovers, last year's crop, so to speak, and were not seriously considered by settlers having a knowledge of the rain storms of Washington. In after times we found this to be correct, but we pitied those who had preceded us through the country.

With October closed six months of arduous journeying, exhausting labor, anxiety and care, to which must be added two other months of preparation, involving their full proportion of the work incident to a pilgrimage where human life was of little moment and the right of property slightly recognized.

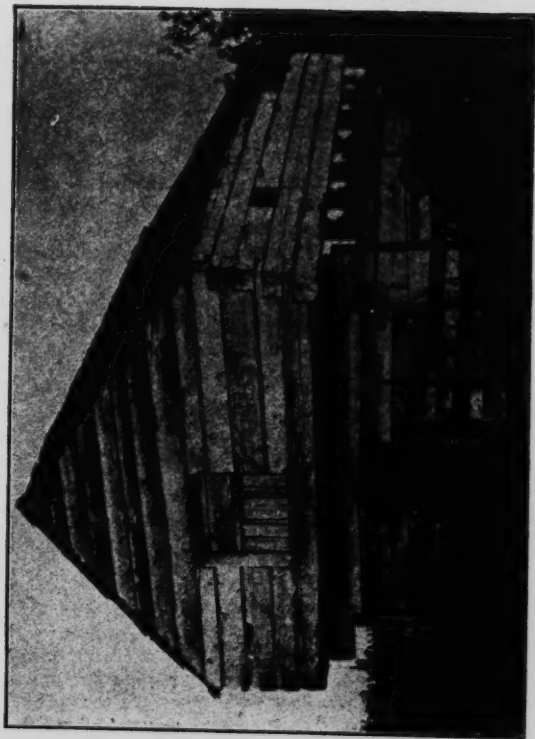
November 1.—It was a bright morning, albeit somewhat bracing when our little caravan went out on the road this morning; the road was generally good, leading through a gently undulating section, and tho not entirely free from fallen timber and heavy underbrush it was not so dense or

obstructed as in places left behind. Where the road was laid through river bottoms and swampy places it had been corduroyed with large cedar logs split in the middle, the crowning side up; they were rough beyond expression, but they were preferable to river bottom mud, so we pronounced them good—after we had gotten safely over.

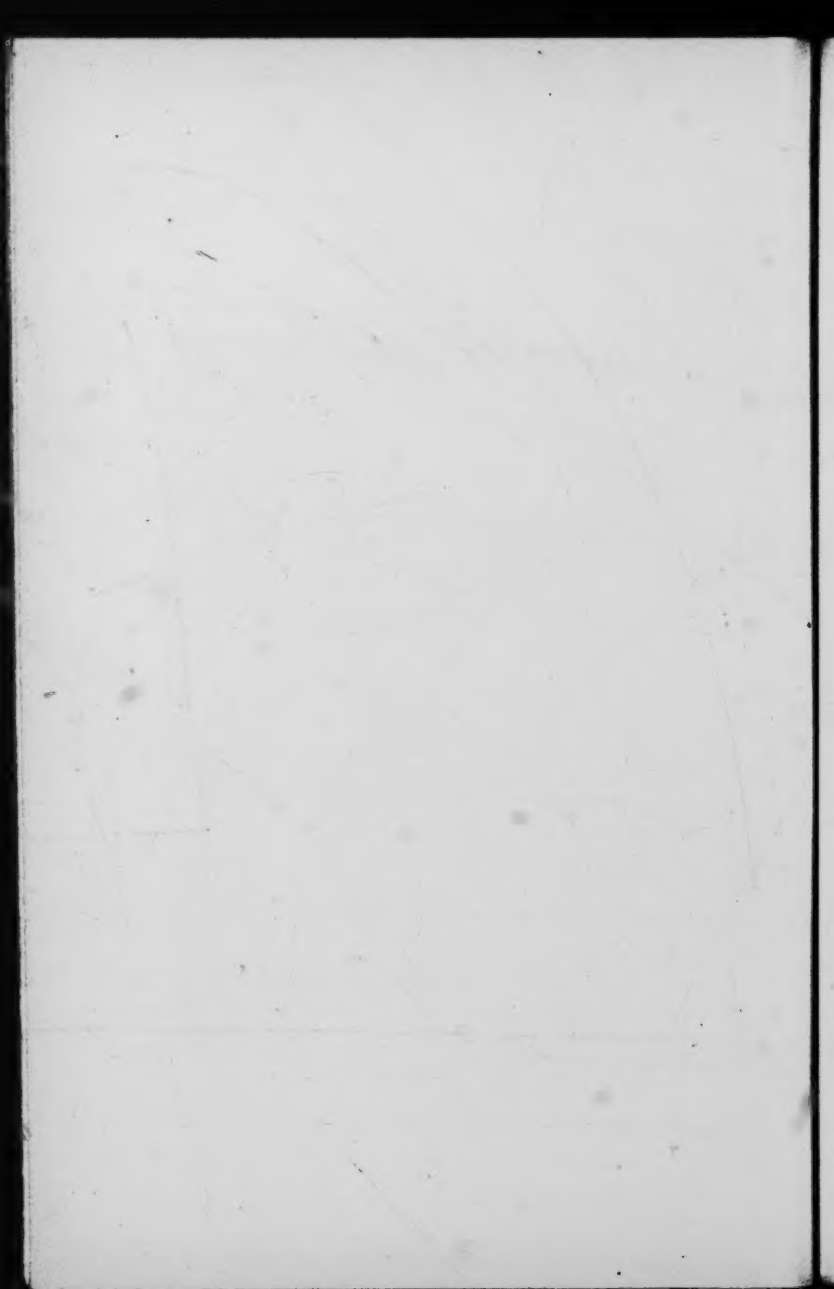
Toward evening we crossed the Skookum Chuck River—in the Indian tongue this signifies rapid, or strong running water—a bridged stream of some consequence, and then entered a smooth level prairie, and having driven far enough closed the day's journey. To get the full strength and musical significance of the name Skookum Chuck, one should hear an Indian pronounce it with all the unction an Indian assumes on important occasions.

The evening was clear and moonlit and the appearance of the heavenly canopy over the prairie called to mind views had in other places and other situations.

November 2.—In passing over the prairie on the verge of which we camped last night, it seemed evident that the chief products of the light soil in a humid atmosphere were ferns, red sorrel and cobble stones, all of the latter appearing to have been washed from some high plain a long way off, then rolled and ground into uniform shape and size, by floods or receding waters in a by-gone age. The succeeding timber of several miles in extent was growing in much the same



Block House.



kind of soil as the prairie, the surface being very rocky, rendering wheeling slow and tiresome.

A large area of open country, which an occasional glimpse through the openings revealed, was known as Mound Prairie; it derived its name from a large mound which stands isolated from all surroundings. The similarity in the appearance of the little hill to the knob which identified a locality and gave a name to a forlorn little settlement on the border of Missouri and Iowa, together with an incident there, arose in my mind and pleasing thoughts followed; a continent spanned the space between the miniature mountains, but the recollection of events clustered near together. Hundreds of small mounds cover the immense area of that prairie, interesting subjects of speculation to the non-scientific mind and of study on the part of those trained to look into natural phenomena.

The numerous buildings of peculiar construction which we had passed on the road led to inquiry as to their utility; they were neighborhood forts or "block houses," built for protection against the Indians during the outbreak of six years before.

They were solid structures made of hewn logs and two stories in height, the upper portion projecting over the lower about six feet; the logs at proper places were pierced for rifles. In these structures the families in places exposed to Indian raids were quickly gathered when occasion required where they would be safe against attack.

The territory then was sparsely populated and settlements widely separated, and being numeri-

cally weak many settlers were murdered by the savages. The Indians were ultimately badly whipped, but it cost dearly in lives; the progress of the territory was paralyzed for ten years.

From the extremity of Mound Prairie three roads diverge, coming together again about twenty miles north, near the Sound. The middle road through the forest was said to be the shortest, but the Black River road the best; and in this country where the best roads were in all conscience as bad as could be conceived of, any choice was to be accepted. It was a case over again of whatever course you would select, you would soon wish you had taken the other.

A rain storm, which all day had hung threateningly, came upon us cold and disagreeable, retarding the previously slow progress; despite the utmost urgency darkness came with attendant uncertainties. I could not urge those mules with a whip; I could have used it on a member of my family just as well. This time the road had a bottom, hard and gravelly, and there was no danger of miring; trusting more to the sagacity of the mules than to my own vision in the concentrated blackness, we were pulled safely through and out to an open prairie where a light in a farm house window betokened a haven of rest, and there we halted for the remainder of the night, within six miles of Olympia.

A penetrating rain storm could not dampen a feeling of exultation that our final destination was so near; that a few more miles—which really ought to have been covered to-day—and the end



MOUNT RAINIER.



would come. A short night's sleep was enough to satisfy all my necessities.

November 3.—We tarried late this morning, hoping that the rain which had fallen heavily all night, and still continued in generous measure, might ease up or cease altogether. But as no promise of cessation appeared we started on, scarcely heeding the storm. I was too near *home* to be mindful of discomforts such as an ordinary rain storm could entail. An hour after starting the rain ceased and all traces cleared away; the remainder of the day was as bright and warm as midsummer.

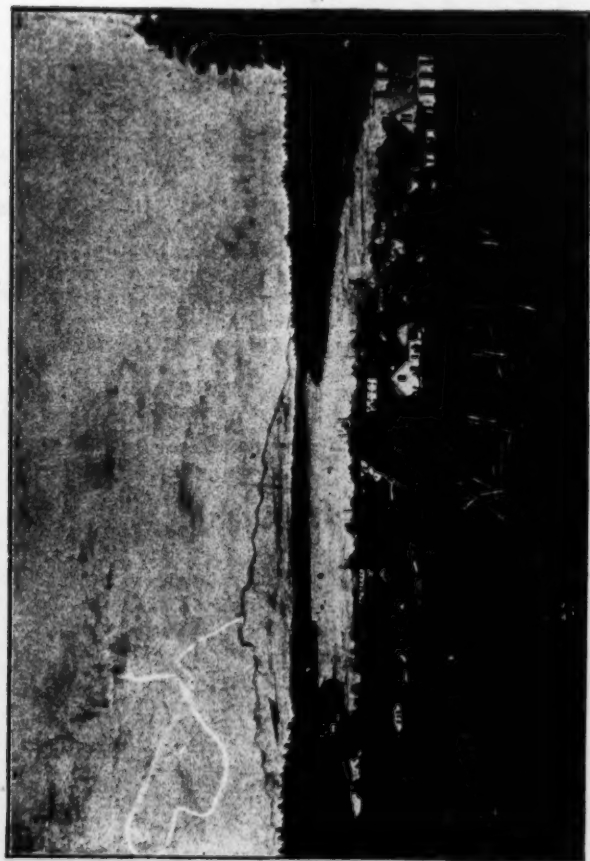
The road skirted the border of Bush prairie, and for a road in that region was good. Through the clay surface on the ridge leading down to the little settlements of Tum Water it was heavy wheeling, owing to the rain, and our little caravan moved over it at slow and methodical pace. Tum Water—a musical name of Indian origin, meaning swift or tumbling water—was a pretty place at the mouth of the Des Chutes River, a fine stream which at this point pours over a series of cataracts in a noisy and turbulent way before emptying into an arm of the bay stretching from the sound. The water power was harnessed to the wheels of several lumber and flouring mills, and was doing duty for the enterprising citizens of the pretty little burg on its banks.

A drive of two miles further, still through forest most of the way, and the beautiful bay came into view, with the little city of Olympia nestling in contentment close to the water's edge. Nothing in the whole world could show a more

fascinating attraction—the end of the long journey was reached. The mules, after being pastured in a good meadow for some weeks, and given an allowance of grain, regained strength and heart, and were in fine condition. They were sold at a good price, at one hundred and fifty dollars each, their ultimate uses being assigned to a pack train. I took occasion to be out of town the day my mute, but steadfast friends, were taken away.

Olympia, W. T., November 4.—I found Olympia, after a short acquaintance, to be a very pleasant place. In many respects it had a young-old appearance which would wear off and improve as time and attention to bettering its surroundings served. The town was situated on a comparatively level site, rising on an easy grade back from the bay, affording unsurpassed drainage. The site, like all other land bordering on the sound, was originally covered with a heavy growth of fir and cedar forest clear to the water's edge, which involved infinite labor and great cost to clear away. The great logs and stumps everywhere gave evidence sufficient that an immense amount of labor still awaited those who would clear up and build on city lots.

Two streets through the embryo city had been placed on fair grade, one north and south leading to the wharf, the other east and west, affording an eastern entrance. A few fine dwelling houses had been erected, but for the most part they were small and of crude construction. The place was situated on Budd's Inlet, the extreme head of



OLYMPIA.

8

Puget Sound and of navigation, a beautiful landlocked and protected sheet of water. The tide, in extreme rise and fall, marks a limit of about twenty-two feet eight inches, and on ebb run far out and left a mud flat exposed in front of the city about a mile and a half down the bay. This was a clam and oyster bed, affording a rich product for the Indians to gather; these beds lasted for many years.

The place was founded about 1850 by Edmund Sylvester, an adventurous New England man, and was selected as a good location for trading with the Indians—Siwashes they came to be known—and it soon became quite a settlement. When I first knew the place it was the largest and most important one on Puget Sound, with a steamer making regular trips to down Sound ports and to Victoria, British Columbia; but there was no direct communication with San Francisco.

In 1853, Isaac Ingalls Stevens arrived at Olympia, and as he had been appointed Governor and ex-officio Superintendent of Indian affairs for the new Territory, he established Olympia as the capital; this action the legislature, which the Governor called together to organize a territorial government, subsequently confirmed. Olympia has since remained the capital amid all the vicissitudes and political strifes which have arisen, having its removal a primary object.

The first place in which Governor Stevens established his office and installed his family, was an exceedingly small building on Main street, near the bay. Sawed lumber was very difficult to obtain, tho millions of feet of splendid timber

stood everywhere ; building operations had to conform to the supply of sawed material. The Governor cleared the heavy tree growth at great cost, from a full block of land, and erected a large dwelling and an office on it. The house was a pretentious executive mansion for that period. The illustration on page 517 will show the manner of style of the house and the condition of its surroundings. It was the most commodious and pretentious dwelling in the capital for some years. When Governor Stevens returned east and went into the army the house was vacant for a time. It was subsequently occupied by Judge Hewitt for two years as a residence and an office for Chief Justice.

At the time of which I write the place contained about four hundred population, largely made up of people from New England and New York. The Olympic, or Coast Range of mountains to the west, from the Straits of San Juan de Fuca, south, loom up admirably in clear weather and add charms to the scenery. Mount Olympus, the highest peak in the range—having an altitude of 8,150 feet—is visible, weather permitting, a hundred miles at sea. The snow never entirely melts from the tops of these mountains, and at favorable times the sunbeams glisten and reflect back gorgeous rays through the blue haze which surrounds them.

The Indians, once the dominant race here and proud possessors of the country, seemed to have sunk under the "civilization" acquired by coming in contact with the whites, and were a squalid and miserable lot. They appeared to live partly by



STEVENS MANSION.



government gratuities and partly by fishing and gathering the bivalves of the mud flats. In strict accord to the Indian instinct wherever he is found, the squaws did about all the drudgery; the "lord of the manor," scorning labor, would sit around and do the whiskey drinking for the household—when he could get it—and put in the rest of the time in the "skookum house," resting.

Olympia at this period was a distant outpost, almost out of the world. A daily mail was served, two days from Portland, by boat and stage, afterwards cut to three times a week, and no telegraph within six or eight hundred miles. An occasional steamer visited the sound from San Francisco, but none regularly. Three months were required for a letter to go to Washington City, or other eastern point, and get an answer back, and the correspondent must lose no time in replying; the postage was ten cents per half ounce or fraction.

All mails for the Sound and a portion for Victoria and the British Possessions came to Olympia by stage, thence were dispatched by steamers once a week to destination. The mails were usually quite heavy, as besides the business correspondence for the Sound country, the official mail for the capital and three considerable military posts was large. The mails were transported from San Francisco overland by coaches, a distance of nearly nine hundred miles, over roads which most of the way were about as rough and wearing as any stage roads ever were; in summer requiring seven or eight days; in winter all the time necessary.

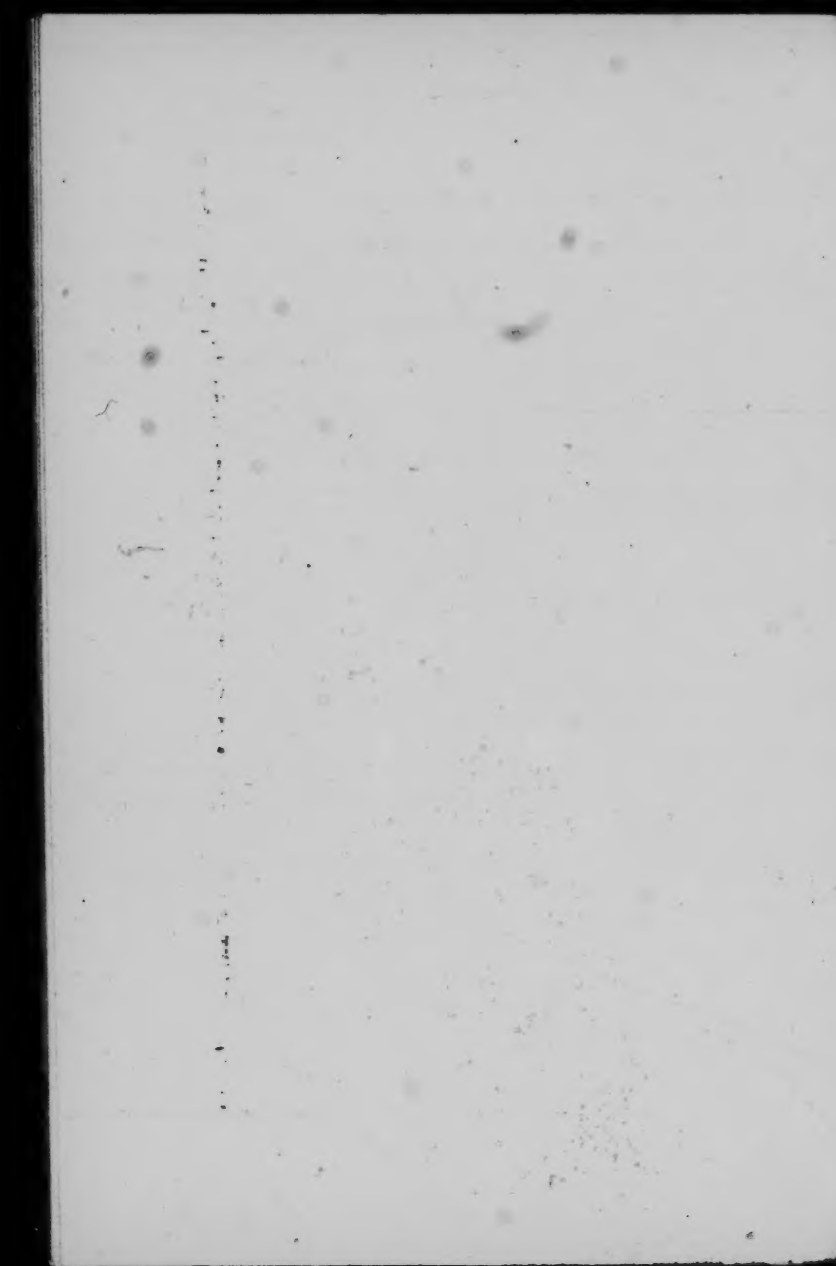
. . . This story would be incomplete without referring to and acknowledging the benign influence exerted, without the least effort or affection, by one of the party, the young lady referred to several times in the foregoing pages, Miss Ellen. I walked with that young lady many a weary mile through blistering sands in a torrid heat, and over towering mountains, enjoying every hour of the time. That was forty-three years ago. For over forty years of that time we have traveled together over a highway more intimately related, that journey commencing about three years after the overland journey ended. She was everything to me in the start, and nothing in the world can dim the lustre of eyes which beamed in loving grace so long ago. Without disagreement of any kind we have had our ups and downs in life, even as the ups and downs of the mountain ranges we traversed together; but the same true, undeviating affection still lingers undimmed in those glances and will so continue until the end of life's journey.

Her share in the labor, the danger, the weary and prolonged duration of this exhausting land journey, was met with an enduring courage, and was an inspiration which overcame incipient troubles. The interest she took in the diary this narrative has grown from was a strong incentive to maintaining the work to the end. Her presence added a charm beyond the measure of words, and days which would otherwise have been surcharged with dreary and oppressive cares, or perhaps something worse, were smoothed over and harmonized, and friction and annoyances forgot-

ten. To a loving wife I render this tribute as the closing words of a story which carries with it recollections in numerous respects pleasing to refer to, as well as an experience amid hours and days of toil and danger that were better forgotten.

We were married in the dwelling erected as the Governor's mansion, previously referred to, August 6, 1865. That occasion gives more than passing value for me to the place and the illustration which are made part of this story.

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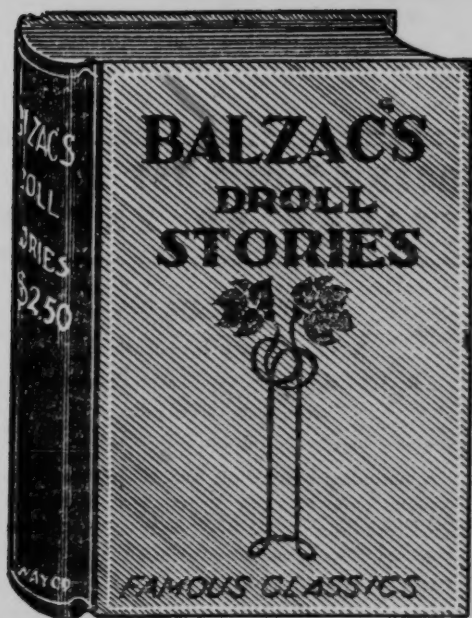
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